4-2020

White, Female Cellist: One (Very Average) Musician's Exploration of Identity Through Jazz Pedagogy

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Honor Scholar Program Senior Project

May 2020

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

So much of this research would not have been possible if it were not for my network of support throughout this process. My sponsor, Dr. Matthew Balensuela, deserves the biggest "thank you," for being a source of constant support in and outside of my musical endeavors, especially over this last year. This research would not have been possible without his patience and dedication. I'm also grateful to Dr. Steven Snyder, for his weekly lessons with me and the necessary patience in working with a classical cellist tackling jazz for the first time. His support and collaboration in figuring out ways to fit the instrumentation to the genre have been invaluable. Dr. Joe Heithaus provided a uniquely creative voice that has shaped this memoir, leading me through a creative writing process to produce the concrete narrative that lives in this thesis.

My family also deserves a huge acknowledgement. For my family at school (Emma, Jules, Patricia and Genevieve) who filled our home with love, and who made me feel supported even in the tougher parts of this research process, I want to communicate how important this last year has been to me and how much I value this little home we've made for ourselves amongst one another. For my family at home, I want to extend my deepest gratitude for their love and guidance, which has been a constant presence in my life since my earliest musical memories. I would not be the person I am today with them.

I. A Small Piece in the Bigger Picture: The Classical World and Emerging Issues in Pedagogy

By some accounts, my interest and participation in the classical world was pre-determined. My mother had known before she started a family that she would encourage a musical interest in her daughters. As a musician herself, she seemed to know the exact recipe for preparing a young person for success. The summer before I started kindergarten, she obtained a cello for beginners, which looked more like an oversized viola, and enrolled me in a Suzuki school, a method of music teaching that requires one parent to learn alongside their child and act as an "at home teacher." In the rust-colored guest room of our house that she began to identify as the "music room," my mother held her own cello against her and awkwardly mimicked the finger positions my own small, unlearned hands attempted. Hers was an ill-fitting three-quarter size instrument of questionable craftsmanship that we had inherited from my grandfather, himself an avid amateur cellist, though untalented, as my grandmother would be sure to tell you. My earliest memories of music were thus insulated in the welcoming familiarity of my own home life.

For years, my mom participated in this process of learning with me, suffering through the many squeaks and squawks of my first sounds, the bitter tantrums that erupted when my five-year-old patience was tested, until gradually phasing out of the process to become a more side-lined yet supportive figure, as is the Suzuki way. Even as she phased out, though, this was the world I had come up in: as my earliest memories of music were created in the comfort of my own home. Even as some other musicians encountered concerned parents who worried over their child's ability to make a living, or who argued that artistic interests were taking away from more academic or more profitable pursuits, my family's support never wavered.

I also felt comfortable in this world because I was well represented in it. My earliest teachers were women who looked like me, came from similar backgrounds, and shared a love for the instrument and classical music. I have fond memories of my lessons. I spent many afternoons on the third floor of a church in the Western suburbs of Chicago. In one of the Sunday school classrooms, walls decorated with a colorful timeline of the Old Testament, clearly painted by kids who attended the church, my cello teacher, Sally, was a familiar presence. She was a person born to work with kids: charismatic, maternal, encouraging with the ability to be disciplinary, and genuinely interest in young people. She had tools and games to teach me techniques, so even if I grew frustrated, she was able to encourage my interest. My mother, even after her days of co-practicing, was a constant presence in my lessons, taking diligent notes in a red 70-page spiral notebook that I would inevitably ignore as I practiced that week. To this day, we have file cabinets full of them.

These two women created a space of total security for me and provided a knowledge that women who resembled me were welcome. This early involvement of women in my education was crucial because the canon itself, especially the works I was playing as a young person, were not especially reflective of my identity. Against the backdrop of countless pieces by Bach, Handel, and Haydn, my mother and Sally solidified classical music as a space welcoming to women, as many educators and mothers would do for countless other girls like myself.

These early experiences provided me with a comfortable existence within classical music's identity and afforded me the ability to go through most of my musical education without ever questioning that comfort. Soon, my music-making expanded outside the home and into the world. I connected with other kids exploring music at young ages, and music became a more collaborative endeavor as I entered middle school and high school. I entered community

orchestras and school ensembles, I bonded with peers who reflected my identity as well—kids from the suburbs of Chicago sharing in a love for music fueled by the help of our helicopter parents, fund-raising school programs, and the countless other resources available to us.

My involvement in the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra (CYSO) would take me into the city every week. My world was growing, but my perspective was not necessarily growing with it. As our mothers deposited us from their SUV's and minivans directly onto Michigan Avenue, they delivered us straight into an unchallenging, mono-colored world. On my short walk from the drop off block to the Fine Arts Building, I would encounter much the same kind of people: tourists pointing to Millennium Park and the Bean directly across from us, older couples shuffling to a matinee at the Symphony just a few blocks down, fellow students, and professional artists who could afford the rent in one of Chicago's most historic and expensive locations. One of my only regular interactions with someone outside the comfort of these familiar identities that passed me on the street was a wheelchair-bound black man with a sign asking for money, who would call out a friendly greeting and jokingly comment about the "rocket-ship" on my back as I hustled to rehearsal. My (wrongly-attributed) fear and anxiety would freeze any reply I could come up with in my throat, something I always regretted but never knew how to address.

Years later I would visit this block again, and still he sat directly outside the Fine Arts Building as he always had. I heard him talking with another man, a friend perhaps, and their conversation, mundane as it was, caught my interest: they talked about music and songs they liked, bands they both enjoyed. The community that I had built around me and that had insulted me from a more diverse world caused me to consider him not as a fellow music lover, but as an outsider to the accepted identity I associated with music.

These issues of identity were the basis for the issues in classical music and its doctrines of teaching at large that I was soon to discover. Though, in many ways, I grew up feeling welcomed by my music community, there was an underlying coldness in the music families to which I belonged. Even though my early education would not force me into any difficult considerations of identity, it still had flaws rooted in that very identity. Though I shared carpools, rehearsal breaks and pre-concert rituals with members of my orchestra in high school, each semester that friendship would be strained by seating auditions and the fallout of their results. At a time in our lives in which identity was something we were all desperately vying for, a bad audition inevitably meant dealing with issues of personal failure. My one friend, Zach and I were in constant competition for the principal seat in CYSO, and despite our closeness, my friendship with him was continuously tested by our competition with each other. I was unable to be truly happy for him if he sat above me, because I became pre-occupied with the realization that I had failed. If I succeeded over him, I could feel the tension moving the other way, and I was both unwilling to initiate a confrontation and resigned to the fact that competition—and the stress it put on relationships—was just part of this world. College audition season was one of the toughest for us. Watching him get into schools I did not cut me down more than seating auditions ever did. For a while, talking to him was hard, and pretending to be happy for him was impossible, so we grew apart. It's a loss I have lamented, especially as I've grown into a cellist with (slightly) stronger resolve against audition seasons.

On one hand, little would change about my musical community as I entered college. DePauw's music school reflected the rest of the classical world in its whiteness and wealth, but the liberal arts' focus on critical examination of structural issues would familiarize me with concepts of white supremacy, privilege, identity, and culture. Considering these issues

academically led to considering them personally, and the degree to which identity affects musical output became an unavoidable question, even while these structural issues remained in evidence at the DePauw School of Music.

Entering college put my classical competitiveness, however, into remission for a while. It was partly because I had achieved something already; it put me at ease to have some confirmation from an outside source that music was a career worth pursuing for me. DePauw also does not participate in the conservatory mentality of competition but is largely a supportive environment in which I have grown and learned. It was a place where I could succeed as well: I worked hard, and it paid off, almost every time. My teacher for these collegiate years, Dr. Eric Edberg, was someone interested in the pitfalls of a classical education and took every opportunity to encourage students to be mindful of their attitudes as they practiced, performed and auditioned. I started to make friends exclusively in the music school and without the intense competition I felt in my high school, combined with a growing self-confidence, I was able to form true and healthy relationships in my musical community like I never had before. So, for a while, I even had myself convinced that I completely cured myself of the competitive and often heartbreaking classical tradition in which I had been brought up.

My senior year at DePauw would be a true test of this personal growth I had undergone. For one, it marked the beginning of the Honor Scholar thesis process, and for the first time I was given a meaningful, research-based opportunity to face the issues of my early classical upbringing. Pedagogy was an obvious choice for researching issues of identity, as this is something learned and reinforced through what we've been taught. Therefore, identities, as they are represented in musical pedagogy, would be a perfect topic, as I desired to inform and address my own identity complex.

My initial thought was to focus my research on non-western pedagogical traditions, in the spirit of reaching beyond both whiteness and Western culture. My long-term goal would be to develop new approaches to classical music through a study of non-Western ones. Although much research exists on other cultural approaches to pedagogy, few would be applicable to the western instruments, and therefore would provide a challenge in applying it to classical music. As such, I began to consider non-western cultures that were tangential to western ones, which led to me consider jazz and jazz pedagogy as non-western. Because jazz music evolved out of the African diaspora, and therefore finds its roots in a non-western culture while being adapted to and situated within western culture, it became a perfect topic for my research.

Research was not a simple or clear path forward, however. A large part of me worried that the pedagogical system I wanted to synthesize from my research was unattainable. I couldn't help but wonder if the flaws in western pedagogy were inherent to the music, and no teaching method, no matter how revolutionary, could change that. I'd never met a musician without self-doubt, who hadn't struggled with extreme self-consciousness and anxiety. It was almost an important social component of classical culture: the bonding of musicians over the pain their music caused them. But, in the more successful moments of this process, I asked back: why is it so crazy to believe that we can teach people to play and love music, without the baggage? Why is that kind of ardent and deep affection for music so continuously forced out of those who commit their lives to it? I admit to my fair share of 20-year old idealism in this process, but for the purposes of this research and for my commitment to pursuing classical music, I was glad for my optimistic belief in the possibility of improvement.

My research would follow several related paths: the process of learning about jazz history, the degree to which the music was embedded within a non-white culture, its intersections with

many other forms of black art, and its existence as an academicized music that evolved from folk songs, spirituals and other non-academic forms of expression. My research would also include, crucially, the direct application of jazz pedagogy to a student of classical cello (myself). Because identity was so crucial to the question I was posing, it was important to subject myself to my own experiment. Weekly lessons with DePauw's jazz professor, Dr. Steven Snyder, would present jazz to me with the express purpose of finding ways to apply the pedagogical methods to a cellist with my classical background. I took part in a jazz improvisation class, and jam sessions throughout the semester, with the caveat that I took on this research method of learning in a music school where the jazz program--though a strong point of our college's curriculum—was still small and predominantly white. Even still, I was experiencing a genre of music that was not only from another culture, but also one where my identities were not well-represented, and my worldview challenged. Learning jazz and completing research would no doubt be a difficult process, not only because learning a new style that was not made for my instrument or identity would be challenging technically, but because addressing issues of whiteness, gender and wealth in my musical identity would be challenging personally as well.

In addition to this research, senior year at DePauw also meant graduate school auditions. This process was the first time in four years that I had opened myself up to the classical world for critique and/or validation, and issues of this outside classical culture came rushing back to relevancy in my life once more. This year was the one in which the products I created were more important than ever. I felt the classical world's pressure of being distilled down to a single audition or musical event, and because so many of these final products would contribute significantly to my future career, I began to equate the quality of my playing with my own quality as a human being in a more tangible way than I ever had before. Even in non-musical

pursuits, I could feel the cold grip of classical competitiveness, the need to be prodigious and perfect, tightening its hold.

The year started out ok. I narrowed down my list of places to apply, and I got through most of the taped auditions to be invited for a live one. While it wasn't remarkable that I'd done so, it was a bit of confidence and reassurance that I was well equipped to handle these auditions.
It was not until one of my earlier college auditions in January that I had to truly come to terms with how not-cured of classical culture I was. Under the pressure of proving to myself that I deserved to be a musician and proving to institutions that I deserved admission, I cracked. From the first note, I could feel the process take its toll. The first piece they asked for was the prelude of Bach's Sixth Cello Suite. The piece is known for being a uniquely dance-like prelude and, being set in the happy key of D Major, it is known amongst cellists as the most joyous of the Bach suites, at odds with its extreme technical difficulty. Though the challenging nature the piece creates a pitfall for cellists to shift focus away from its happy demeanor, I had generally been able to access the part of myself that was only in love with the music, the part of me that felt happy just to have the opportunity to create joyful noise. However, this audition proved to be the exact opposite experience. The opening notes—an oscillating triplet figure between open strings and fingered notes that usually results in an open and ringing first sound—didn't ring at all as they had in the practice room minutes before. I strangled the strings with both hands, each finger of my left coming down hard and shaky on the instrument as I tried to force the correct intonation from them, and the right hand losing control, causing my thumb and forearm to tighten on the bow in desperation to regain authority. I wasn't making music, I was fighting with myself. And from this internal confrontation came the biggest disappointment: I took no joy in making this music.

I hadn't felt that way since college auditions four years prior. Since then, every performance and audition, even underneath the nerves and effort, was still joy. This audition derailed that process. I didn't practice the next day. I felt tired in a non-sleep-deprived way and felt the sting of mild anxiety underlying everything I did for the next week. It felt like I was wasting time, or running out of time, or spending my time wrong. Hearing about the good auditions of my performance-major friends no longer made me feel as comfortably proud and supportive as I had before; of course, I was happy for them, but every "Good job!" and "I'm so happy for you!" left the hint of something bitter in my mouth. I was unpleasantly reminded of my relationship with Zach and how musical competitiveness had soured it. I spiraled into worry about my friendships now. Even with those that I considered family, does a life in music mean an inherent strain on these relationships?

I was clearly not as free of the downsides of a classical music education as I had thought. Despite touting the benefits of an interdisciplinary, non-conservatory setting for preserving sanity in one's undergraduate music education, I had been served the same meal as any of my conservatory peers: expectations of perfection and prodigy, with a side of fragile self-worth, overly influenced by outside judgement of music ability. In my four-year seclusion from the more competitive classical world, I had expected that world to change into a more perfect and healthy environment that would welcome me and my liberal arts cello-playing with open arms. This audition also revealed that that world would not change, at least not without mass oversight. I would have to either change myself or contribute to changing it. Fortunately, I was on a path to proposing research that aimed to do both.

A week after this audition, my final semester at DePauw began. Still combatting feelings of doubt and failure, I found myself in a practice room with one of my students, resuming our

weekly lessons after a long winter break. For the first time in my life, I had the very conscious thought of hating teaching. After six years of teaching and never once questioning that it was something that I loved, the thought shocked me. It wasn't the teaching that I hated, exactly. What I hated was watching my student hang her head as she communicated to me that she thought she had done a bad job in a run-through of her piece. She apologized; she hadn't had enough time to practice over break. Her grandfather had been sick, her family had travelled, she had the flu, etc. It wasn't up to her standards, but what she really feared was that it wasn't up to mine. She seemed sorry and a little sad, and I couldn't help but feel sorry right back. Being on already tenuous footing with the classical world at that moment, I became angry at this culture that had forced such a negative and self-critical reaction from my student. She was, to me, a young person who I had loved to watch grow up and with whom I loved sharing music. But what was I to her? As the person communicating the classical world to her, showing her how to be a part of it not just by teaching her how to play an instrument but also by being immersed in that world myself, I became a person she feared to let down, who's judgement she held her breath for. It honestly hurt to watch her fear my own pronouncement of her failure. Still, I had to communicate what she had to fix, right? Or else what was I there for? As I sandwiched a critical comment in between two compliments on their growth—"Your tone is really coming along!" and "That left hand looks much better than last week though, right?"—I still knew she would hear the bad far louder than the good. She always did. Because, despite all of my own negative experiences and any measures I took to avoid it, she was still being taught firmly within the confines of a music tradition that encourage competition, harsh self-criticisms, and a constant awareness of external judgement. Worst of all, my judgement of her finished product run-through took precedence over any qualitative assessment of her growth or improvement, which seemed antithetical to our

relationship as teacher/student, yet completely compatible with the subject in which our relationship was situated: classical music.

Seeing this particular pain on a young face solidified that I had to find an alternative way to participate in classical music, if I wanted to participate in it. Although this genre shakes the faith of most of its participants, I still felt like it was where I belonged. Call it artistic destiny, or a young person's naiveté—it may well be either, or both—but I felt a stronger desire to contribute something that challenged and improved the current state of classical music education, more than I felt the desire to abandon ship.

As pedagogy in art tends to define the art itself, I was worried about my own career as a performing artist as well, and how it might be negatively affected by these strict identities and the consequent flaws of the musical community. In my own definition, art necessitates newness: it is a contribution of something unique and worthy to the world. Though I never strove for groundbreaking, my musical goals had hinged on the prerequisite that I had something interesting to say. But how would I contribute to a more diverse, interesting classical world if my own existence within in that world did not diversify it? If my identity had somewhat predetermined my interest in and my ability to succeed in the classical world, it was hard to believe it would be an interesting perspective.

It is this frank acknowledgement of critical issues with the current state of western pedagogy, paired with these questions of identity moving towards an inevitable head, that confirmed this research project: studying alternative pedagogy became not only a chance to understand my identity within a genre, but also to avoid delivering such an identity-focused and binary education to the students with whom I worked.

The purpose of this memoir, and this research in general, is not to create jazz cellists or blend two genres. As well, the purpose is not to infringe on jazz's unique cultural existence or insist that jazz broaden those identities to include my own. On a practical level, I wanted to ascertain how western classical pedagogy could be improved if it broadened its methods to include perspectives outside white supremacy and privilege, and what skills we lose when we construct such strict exclusions. My research also sparked questions about the ethics of constructing pedagogical binaries, as well as the question of whether to teach jazz as an academicized style, or a cultural tool. My lived experiences of the past few months have only intensified the importance of these questions for me.

Posing these questions held the exciting possibility of answering some of my questions about identity within fields of music. However, dealing with identity can be a messy thing. Throughout the entire process, I would hold a few additional questions close. Is using a non-western music as the subject of my research appropriating a culture to satisfy a personal quandary? Is the simple act of playing jazz or inserting myself into a jazz curriculum appropriation? And am I the right person to write about identity in music, seeing as I have always enjoyed a comfortable existence in a music community whose larger demographic matched my own?

I don't feel I have the authority to answer these questions unequivocally, and I have enough belief in the value of my research that these questions did not ultimately deter me form pursuing this line of study. It is my hope only to contribute honesty to the general field of knowledge. My experience with identity, as expressed in this memoir, should not eclipse or take precedence over any other. My hope is to put forth a small piece in the bigger picture of identity in music and though this memoir is based in academic research and fulfills criteria for a research

project, it is offered in the hopes that it provides a candid account of my experience, and that it will encourage other musicians—and non-musicians—to value diversity, creativity and accessibility. At its heart, that is what this research aims to affect. It has also become my aim to reshape the identities that define me, and therefore those that define the genre I love, for a better future generation of musicians.

II. Jazz Tourism: Learning Jazz on Cello and the Unavoidable Influence of Identity

My lessons with Dr. Snyder during senior year did not represent the beginning of my relationship with jazz. My first "jazz experiences," I regret to admit, were still entrenched in whiteness. To this day, traditional jazz *still* invokes holiday nostalgia, as I remember countless Christmases at the pine-scented creaky-floored home of my grandmother, who's love for Bing Crosby and Andy Williams was at its all-time high during Christmas time. Whether listening to "White Christmas" while my sister, grandma and I hand-cut dough for a family recipe on Christmas Eve Day or enjoying "Winter Wonderland" as we opened presents the next day, my earliest jazz experiences were catered to my own comfort and at least part of my identity as a white woman.

In my earliest experiences, I listened to this music with no real awareness of race. My research would lead me to explore the racial side and nuances of jazz's history, as well as to investigate to what degree the music itself was representative of a racial and cultural identity. But in the meantime, I found a way to connect with a music that utilized non-western stylistic traits. And although the work of jazz pillars like Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker, Miles Davis and John Coltrane would reach me far later in life, the music was at least in my field of vision.

So, even as "white jazz" served to pique my interest the genre, I developed an interest in the music itself and I like to think that despite the racial elements being stripped from the music by Bing Crosby's crooning, I was still finding a connection with this style of music, based in a distinctly non-European art as it was.

Acquiring an interest in jazz was not the only pre-requisite for playing it. Instrumentation was also a factor. Because I had started my musical studies on cello earlier than music was introduced in the school system, I was given an opportunity to learn a new instrument in 5th grade when the middle school band director showcased all the fun instruments we could learn and blow into. Knowing I wanted to participate in some way in jazz, I chose trombone. It felt familiar yet foreign, as its range, mellow tone and ability to move freely from note to note without the hindrance of valves or keys appealed to the cello player in me.

A new world unfolded for me. Aside from the obvious newness of the instrument, many other new experiences would accompany my trombone playing. One that I noticed in particular, especially in the critical and cringe-inducing time of middle school, was the different demographic my trombone would include me in: a world of performance dominated by men. I was the only girl who played trombone in middle school, and one of three in high school. My cello Suzuki school, on the other hand, was almost exactly a fifty-fifty gender split. For the first time, I had difficulty viewing my fellow musicians as peers. Maybe it was because of the incredibly gender-binary middle school experience, or simply the newness of being an outsider of any kind in music, but my jazz and wind band experiences would feel far less community-driven or collaborative, as I struggled to find a familiar, female face in the onslaught of middle and high-school boys drawn to the same instrument.

Kathleen McKeage actually documents this phenomenon in her study, published for the *Journal of Research in Music Education.* She finds that women do not participate in jazz programs at the same rate as their male counterparts, in either high school or college. She cites a few different explanations: jazz is a historically male-dominated field, women lack role models who make jazz feel welcome to them, they are encouraged to play instruments often not found in

jazz (such as flute or strings), and the nature of improvisation in its lack of a single musical authority or set of rules seems to appeal to women at a lesser rate.[1] McKeage's research—a series of surveys of multiple programs at different high schools and colleges—does indicate an implicit relationship between gender and involvement in jazz, as well as statistically significant affirmations of the explanations for a lack of female involvement. Though I had chosen an instrument far more uncommon for women than men, I feel it was somewhat of a short-cut. That is to say, I bypassed some of the pressures that make girls avoid trombone because my interest was based on its similarity to cello, an instrument with a far smaller gender divide.

Despite these gender barriers, I stuck with the trombone. Still a classical cellist at heart, I kept my involvement in jazz casual. In high school, I accepted the third-chair seat, a role that calls for supporting musical material, low-range harmonies, and negates the expectation for soloing, which was often expected of the first and second players. Here I embraced a style of music that was different from my day-to-day classical music attire, yet avoided opportunities for improvisation, high virtuoso playing, or serious consideration to important stylish traits of the genre. This third trombone seat, which I held for five straight years in three different ensembles at two different schools, and an attempt at the genre that was not quite earnest but casually appreciative, allowed me to experience jazz exactly the way a classical cellist wants to: with no risk of failure. This casual and academic approach, which was common amongst many classical musicians I knew, would take on a deeper meaning once I began my research and was forced to consider the effects of learning music as a style alone, and ethical questions this kind of learning raised.

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[1] Kathleen McKeage, "Gender and Participation in High School and College Instrumental Jazz Ensembles," *Journal of Research in Music Education.* 52, no. 4 (Winter, 2004): 343-356.

So, though jazz was not new to me, my lessons with Dr. Snyder were everything that my third trombone seat experience had not been. Though cello was my more comfortable instrument, participating in jazz on cello required a full commitment to being at odds with its larger identity because I represented a non-traditional instrumentation for the genre as well. These lessons would also represent my first serious attempts at jazz. Most importantly, though, my attempt of this genre was also personal for the first time. Learning jazz, earnestly this time, would involve the risk of failure, and of being very bad at something I felt the pressure to be good at. I would realize a vulnerability in this process. The risk of failure, especially to my classical mind, was daunting. Entering a new musical style required embracing almost certain failure, and despite my attempts to make peace with that, a small part of me (that was probably a bigger part than I wanted to admit) wanted to pick it up naturally. The classical musician in me wanted to be a prodigy. Fortunately, in the context of my research, even failure would be a reliable source of research, and as my focus was on the pedagogy and not the music itself, I was able to ease myself through my first few experiments in being very bad at a new thing.

As I had suspected, jazz lessons were many things that my classical lessons weren't and had me engage with learning styles with which I was both uncomfortable and unprepared. True to its origins as a non-scripted tradition, and despite Dr. Snyder's attempts to use some written tools to help me learn, our lessons still relied predominantly on my ability to aurally identify patterns of chords that Dr. Snyder would play and repeat them back to him. Never had I felt so incompetent on my instrument. Almost every note I tried was not the right one, and the more I hit wrong notes the more confused my ear got. For the first few lessons, I would have to resort to sneaking peaks at Dr. Snyder's hands on the keyboard to identify the notes. Despite my competence in traditional aural skills based on concert music traditions, my ears were not up to

par with even basic jazz lessons. This deficiency was also magnified by my unfamiliarity with chords and intervals more common in jazz: the dominance of seconds, thirds and sevenths threw my ears off and, combined with the fear of failing, obscured my ability to focus on the task at hand.

Dr. Snyder recognized this difficulty and moved towards materials that were inclusive of my background, including notated lead sheets with scales and chords written out in each bar, and a bass line tutorial, also notated (Appendix A and B). Outside of lessons, I was assigned transcriptions and listenings in order to improve those skills that a classical education had not prioritized. Once again, I confronted the limitations of my ear and my experience with the genre, as transcribing solos I thought would be easy proved to be an arduous task. While transcribing Sonny Rollins' improvised solo on "Pent Up House," (Appendix C). I listened over and over to the initial scale. It sounded so simple and yet I could not figure out the exact intervals. It was extremely frustrating, and the more it impacted me emotionally, the less successful I was. Eventually, I found the right intervals, though it didn't feel like a success at all; the simple act of failing initially rendered this accomplishment void in my mind. This transcription process would reveal a few key things about my practice approach: I was focused on the product, so much so that I took no real lesson from the process. I was also focused on accomplishment in general; that I was fulfilling this task fast enough and with enough accuracy to avoid the label of "failure." Both of these showcased a clear classical approach to a non-classical genre. Because classical music is a written music, and there is less individuality or creativity in the creation of the final product, that process of creating the piece itself is not as valuable of a pursuit; the art comes in the perfection of the notes. Because this was my approach, I was not only setting myself up for failure, but missing the point entirely.

Jazz was exhausting. It was the same kind of exhaustion of living in a foreign country. I felt jazz lessons were filled with a constant translation process, as converted style of learning to a more familiar one, or, when that failed, undergo a more immersive experience of embracing confusion and failure, for the purpose of learning the language better. I felt like I placed a burden on Dr. Snyder, as one might their host, for my reliance on him to explain everything to me in my language or making it as accessible as possible to my jazz tourism. Most of all, I felt the distinct and consistent low thrum of out-of-placeless that categorizes the quiet moments of my travel experiences: the discomfort of a hotel room when missing one's home or the desire to see someone you recognize on the street of a foreign country, where you know no one. The feeling is not so overtly dramatic, but present at all times. In the tougher moments of my research, my homesickness for a genre at which I excelled and with which I was comfortable felt overwhelming.

The foreign feeling of jazz was not solely the result of my inexperience with it. The music itself opposed every aspect of the music I'd been privy to since my childhood. As I delved into the more academic side of this research for this thesis, tracking a history of jazz's identity as an art form rooted in both black aesthetics and male relationships, I would understand why the music itself felt so completely uncomfortable. My musical experience, the music I had taken seriously up to this point, was only informed by traditions of European aesthetics, and soon I would understand more fully the way this affected me, on both musical and personal levels.

Much of my approach to jazz lessons was informed by this desire to translate jazz studies to have a direct application to the cello. This translation necessitated a good deal of work on my own part, as well as outside help. As I began to notice patterns in the important scales necessary to improvise successfully in the tunes we were working on, one of the first things I set out to do

was create a universal fingering for some of these jazz scales (Appendices D). I was used to thinking less in notes and more in patterns and hand positions, as I did with the universal fingerings for classical scales. The transcriptions—"Five Spot After Dark" and "Pent Up House" respectively—that Dr. Snyder assigned to me provided great opportunities to work out what kind of bowings worked for the instrument, and how my technical approach would change based on the instrument and style I was trying to emulate (Appendix E and C).

Developing my approach to jazz and organizing that into something more understandable was a helpful first start in breaking into this new world, but I still felt a bit overwhelmed with the many different directions I could go in my approach to jazz cello-playing. With a wide range, ability to be plucked or bowed, and many different technical approaches, the cello could potentially provide a versatile addition to a jazz sound. Was it best to try and use the instrument as a sort of musical chameleon? Or was the best approach in playing a non-traditional jazz instrument to embrace its unique sound and abilities as a way to extend the colors usually available to a jazz band? I was wondering if there were prominent jazz cellists in the same way that there were jazz violinists. The existence of jazz cellists was far less common, it seemed. However, I did come across a few. One in particular, a New York based cellist named Erik Friedlander had himself published a few beginner's introductions to cello.[2] Friedlander represented a "real" jazz cellist: he was firmly in the scene within New York, sporting an impressive discography and collaborations with multiple established jazz musicians, like Benny Golson and John Zorn. The pedagogical materials on his website looked different from my own. After speaking to him in an over-the-phone interview, I discovered a couple reasons why: Friedlander began on guitar, which made him utilize pizzicato far more often than I did, and a

[2] http://www.erikfriedlander.com/.

more concentrated, longer-running career in jazz that had reshaped his technique. Representative of his materials are his "Lesson Two" (Appendices F through H), as well as his bowings in "Blues for Alice" (Appendices I). His bowings were harder for me to do, and I realized they were putting emphasis on the off-beats (which are emphasized more often in jazz than in classical). Though I had initially judged them as "bad" bowings, what I began to consider was that there was a technique for playing cello which, like the pedagogy itself, opposed a classical approach but was equally, if not more, valid in its own right.

All these tools of translation were helpful for getting a foothold in this new genre, but in a way, it was also a product of my identity and my background. I was not engaging in a holistic jazz approach, because, I think, it would have been like jumping into the deep end before learning how to swim. My experience with jazz is very representative of how a classical cellist would approach the genre, just as Friedlander's was representative of his experiences.

Still, even though my approach was clearly from a classical musician's background and was overly academic as a result, jazz itself was getting more approachable, and even more fun. I felt I was acclimating a bit, but still with a thrilling level of discomfort; after all, it is the experience of being out of one's comfort zone that makes travel appealing. Any professor of language would tell you immersion is the best way to experience a culture in its totality, as much as a tourist can, anyway. I was being given the opportunity any trip gives you: seeing new sights, tasting different foods and, most importantly, experiencing another culture's traditions. My exhaustion was more likely coming from the process of constant translation, and the desperation to make something foreign feel familiar. I realized it would become important to take on these jazz lessons with a different focus: no longer translating to something I could understand from a classical perspective and instead forcing myself to be uncomfortable and truly bad as I learn a

fundamentally new skill. After a couple weeks of lessons, I ask Dr. Snyder if we can start to do lessons with no notated music helping me through. I get rid of my scale sheets, but continued to practice the scales, using the fingerings but also careful to say the note names out loud so I associated notes with positions, instead of just memorizing a pattern. I solo without the arpeggiated chord lead sheet that Dr. Snyder had given me for my first couple of lessons, with notes that were sure-fire "right answers." These written aids are more than just crutches. They are a barrier of entry for me into what I think jazz should be about: the process of trial and error, the creation of a product, rather than the "right" answer in the product.

Lessons get better and worse from here. I get headaches right after lessons, because the process of improvising this way, where my mind has to move way faster than it ever has as I make decisions about what notes fit best, feels like its rewiring my brain. For a while I sound much worse, and I make more mistakes. I get better at not dwelling on the wrong notes or getting discouraged. Dr. Snyder adopts this helpful strategy of repeating chorus after chorus, so I have no idea when my soloing might end, and I don't feel so much pressure to get it right the first time. I do start to feel myself settling into this new approach to learning and playing, although it's not consistent. This aspect of learning is more universal; the imperfect application of a new concept, built into a reliable skill with consistent practice.

As I was getting more into the swing of things, Dr. Snyder and I tried to figure out a way to transition my lessons to a more public jazz experience. We had tentatively started to plan some kind of performance at DePauw's Weekly "Jazz at the Duck" series. I had wanted to play numbers that showcased the multiple approaches to playing jazz cello that my lessons had revealed to me, whether it was my own instinct to simply tweak classical approaches in order to parallel the sounds of melodic jazz instruments, like trombone and saxophone, or Snyder's

suggestion to utilize the familial similarities between cello and string bass to perform the bass-line function and solo in the same style, or even if it was to move in Erik Friedlander's direction, using more pizzicato in a high register and transforming the cello into a guitar-like instrument with a completely non-classical function within the ensemble. The possibilities and options this event were actually very exciting, even though performing in a public space would push me directly out of my comfort zones. However, these plans could never come to fruition as we had intended, and my jazz experience in the second semester of this research would look drastically different, as this semester would show me what it truly meant to make music outside of my comfort zone.

III. Complicating the Maleness of Jazz: Women and Feminism Jazz

Research outside lessons with Dr. Snyder would prove invaluable and critical to my understanding of the music itself. Because jazz itself and its traditions seemed to fundamentally opposed my classical music experiences, I delved into the academic side of research in an attempt to more fully articulate what exactly was so foreign and different about this music, and why that was true. My identity was that of a white, female cellist with a classical background. My understanding of the identity most welcomed in jazz was: black, male instrumentalist (non-cellist) with a primary jazz background. I understand that these identities, as with identity politics at large, were reduced and generalized and that they did not necessarily represent everyone in their communities but they did seem to provide a barrier of entry to those who did not fit them. Understanding the intricacies of identity politics within a single musical genre would be imperative to my work. Even at the DePauw, the aspect of my identity that was most obviously a barrier of entry for me was gender. Especially in the scope of jazz, where the vast majority of my section-mates were men, my identity as a woman actually did feel like a specific barrier for feeling comfortable in the genre. As I started to research women in jazz, I began to understand that this may be because jazz and classical worlds follow similar histories in regard to gender.

Sally Placksin's *American Women in Jazz* is a comprehensive overview of female involvement in jazz and reveals an untold history of women as important influencers of the genre. She traces the gender imbalance in jazz to African tradition, which, like Western tradition, held that keyboards and strings were appropriate for women, whereas horns and drums were

reserved for men."[3] Still, following emancipation, there was a clear priority for African-American communities to develop artistic and musical access, something that had been denied during their enslavement. This represents a foundation being laid for the interconnectedness of race and music, in jazz's history: the decision to prioritize access to musical instruments was a direct reaction to a previous racialized restriction illuminates the historical truth of "black music." Placksin asserts that, even before newly emancipated families could afford furniture, they made efforts to include organ or piano instruments in their homes.[4] This interest in access did not extend to gender, as it shared the same gendered restrictions as the Western church: horns and percussion were masculine instruments, while piano was feminine. This gendering even gave Jelly Roll Morton a complex at an early age, as he was said to have feared being "misunderstood" for his instrumentation choice.[5]

Still, there were far more women (especially pianists) involved in early jazz and performing arts history outside of the very feminine roles of acting and singing. Pianists like Julia E. Lee, Lovie Austin, Alberta Simmons, or Mary Lou Williams, as well as horn players like Dyer Jones, Doller Jones (her daughter), and Irma Young were leaders of their own bands, composers and arrangers of their own music. Groups like the Lafayette Ladies Orchestra (founded at the Lafayette Theatre in New York) and the Colored Female Brass Band in Michigan, existed and each woman had her own individual effect on the jazz world, but few have been preserved in recording or legacy. Of the three horn players, only Doller Jones was ever recorded professionally, despite the far-reaching influence of each artist. Lovie Austin led a band

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[3]Sally Placksin, *American Women in Jazz: 1900 to the Present: Their Words, Lives and Music* (New York: Wideview Publications), 41.

[4] Placksin, *American Women in Jazz,* 41.

[5] Placksin, *American Women in Jazz,* 45.

of 5-6 men from her piano, and yet her name is preserved only in revisionist historical texts. They were not afforded icon status in the ways their male counterparts were, but this does not mean that they were not an integral part of developing jazz music, culture and, therefore, identity.

This discrimination of instrumentation based on gender is not the most overt discriminatory influence on women's involvement in the genre, but neither is it insignificant. The nuance of gendering instrumentation allows for a much more insidious version of sexism to take hold, one that McKeague documents well in her work and one I have observed in my own experiences. The wealth of talented female pianists and violinists can contribute to false idea that there is equal opportunity to succeed in music as a whole, when this is not the case, given the limitations put on instrumentation—and therefore genre—in the early stages of musical exploration. Before erasure become a factor, women must negotiate simple act of entering into the genre.

My discovery of women's involvement in jazz despite an identity of male domination was critical, but not comprehensive. Authors like Angela Y. Davis would take this involvement a step further to argue that the music of blues women itself was feminist, as she establishes a foundational and functional root of black feminism in blues history in her novel *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism: Gertrude "Ma" Rainey, Bessie Smith, and Billie Holiday.* These singers, throughout the 1930's, were key members of the blues communities. Their subject matter also did not sacrifice on its promotion of black female experience, its self-advocacy or its feminist politics. Women's blues songs ranged over a multitude of topics, but many centered upon issues

like individual sexual love, autonomy through sexuality, and "sexual love as a collective experience of freedom,"[6] representing a few key pillars of black feminism.

These songs, like many popular songs of the time, often expressed ideals of romantic relationships. However, the subject of romance in women's blues was completely different from these popular (white songs). Many blues songs rejected domestic life, children, husbands and marriages as central subjects, as well as the cult of motherhood along with it.[7] This rejection was an additional pillar of black feminism, because women's domestic dominance, as it was portrayed in popular culture, was centered in whiteness and therefore was largely perceived as irrelevant by black communities and social theorists of the time. Bessie Smith's song "Young Woman's Blues" even conflates the institution marriage with whiteness as she sings "I ain't no high yella, I'm a deep killer brown / I ain't gonna marry, ain't gon' settle down."[8] Besides Smith's open claim of her desire to remain unmarried as she embraces a freedom of sexual pleasure, her association of being "high yella" (or white-passing/light-skinned) with an increased interest in marriage illustrates its racial connotations.

The nature of gender roles, as blues reflected them, also invited black feminism in this genre to reframe gender and sexuality in a nonwhite-centric space. Though it was not a common theme, women's blues fostered a more welcoming environment for topics like queer love and gender queerness.[9] Some songs referred overtly to relationships between women, or the experience of a gender non-conforming narrator. Queerness became a central issue to black feminist movements, as much of gendered oppression against women came through hetero-

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[6]Angela Y. Davis, *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism: Gertrude "Ma" Rainey, Bessie Smith, and Billie Holiday* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1998), 5.

[7] Davis, *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism*, 9.

[8] Davis, *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism*, 13.

[9] Davis, *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism*, 23

patriarchal control of black female reproduction. Queer expressions of love and the reclamation of sexual power through relationships in which reproduction was not a factor, was a powerful way to express freedom for these blues singers.[10] Ma Rainey is one Blues singer who sings more openly about queerness and alludes to lesbian relationships, as she sings: "They said I do it, ain't nobody caught me. / Sure got to prove it on me. / Went out last night with a crowd of my friends. / They must've been women, 'cause I don't like no men.[11] Her explicit preference of women over men, at least in this moment of the song, would preface the emergence of centralized lesbian culture in America in the 1970's, which revolved around art and music supporting queer themes.[12] Though some of these songs avoided a clear label of queerness, many expressed queer and erotic love as a conduit to black liberation or gender-queering identities as a result of the incompatibility of their gender expression with the popular understanding of these roles.

With the cult of domesticity rejected by black feminism, Davis suggests that blues women were able to name problems often pushed to the "shadows of domesticity" in white popular culture: namely, violence against women. Though the topic of domestic violence in blues music is complex, as some songs by both men and women arguably overly romanticize and accept it, the simple acknowledgement of its existence extended an important "aesthetic precursor" to contemporary approaches to misogynist violence and organized political change.[13] Some blues women re-appropriated the nature of domestic violence, as songs touched on abuse perpetrated by the women themselves. Although this is certainly not a feminist statement, it is an indication

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[10] Grace Kyungwon Hong, "Blues Futurity and Queer Improvisation," In *Death Beyond Disavowal: The Impossible Politics of Difference* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), 96.

[11] Davis, *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism*, 33

[12] Davis, *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism*, 72.

[13] Davis, *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism*, 26.

of those traditional gender roles being upset in the music of blues women, as well as an openness about one's experience, regardless of whether or not it held up to any moral authority.

A large reason for blues women to subvert the restrictions of popular music had to do not only with the "low" associations of their music (and relief form the pressure to fill a white mold), but also the autonomy of blues instrumentation itself. Davis suggests that the blues, as opposed to big band and bebop, were specifically conducive to black women artists, because most blues singers of this time were self-accompanied vocalists, having complete control of the creative process (so, acting as composer, lyricist and performer) and avoiding the need to seek out approval from the male-dominated or white-washed big bands. The solitary nature of blues singing added a level of independence and autonomy to these artists work, allowing for a uniquely non-subversive and overt political platform for their feminism. Davis suggests that the individuals singing alone, accompanying themselves also represented the "psychosocial realities" of black womanhood.[14]

It's at this point I am no longer able to find parallels between my own experience with gender in jazz and the blues women who contributed so much to the genre. I am not interested in equating white and black womanhood in anyway; the aesthetics of their feminism and the history of these two societal positions have been disparate. However, qualifying the maleness that I had associated—that many people associate—with jazz called in to question the accuracy of generating accepted identities within a genre. McKeague's work also proves that, despite a rich history of women in jazz/blues at its earliest points as Placksin represents it, the contemporary state of genre is dominated by both maleness and an association of the genre with men, rather than women. The erasure of this presence is an argument for less strict identity policies, either in

[14] Davis, *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism*, 32.

the genre itself or in the pedagogical approach to it. Though blues women's morality was erroneously muddied by white academic writing and judgement of their lifestyle as immoral, Bessie Smith and Daphne Duval Harrison's messages of staunch feminist strength, if given the proper attention in jazz pedagogical programs, would increase women's involvement of women in jazz and more accurately represent the social purpose this music can serve: not just as a means for black social commentary, but commentary by black women, specifically.

This suggests that, even though the identity representative of the genre is at odds with womanhood, ideals of black feminism have still impacted the genre and shaped its existence. Jazz and blues have been used for social representation of black women and black feminist ideals, and therefore is a genre that women have as much claim to as men. The false identity of maleness may be the white American interpretation of events: because jazz was at the mercy of American consumerism and, in its later years of mainstream popularity, white American consumerism specifically. It is quite possible that the intersection of gender and race was the key ingredient to excluding women from their own genre. America could accept (or perhaps, control) one or the other, but not together. As such, the history and identity of jazz has disproportionately representative of black men over their female counterparts.

IV: Solidifying Jazz's Racial Identity: Cultural Applications and Black Aesthetics in Jazz

Race and gender, as they operate in understanding the specific cultural connotations of jazz, are imperatively intersectional. The feminism as represented in blues songs by black singers is rooted in black values, not white (more mainstream) feminist conversations of the time. Angela Davis suggests that the prevalence of certain content in blues women's songs reach beyond black feminism to comment on black issues at large. When a blues woman sings of a "relationship gone sour in the North frequently serves as a way of articulating the frustrations, disappointments and disillusionment black women suffered as a consequence of migration."[15] These songs, still from the female perspective of heartbreak, reflect a larger consciousness of black migration towards the North in hopes of more plentiful opportunities, an experience documented well in black art at the time.

The intersections of jazz with other black arts establishes that these products are imbued with social and cultural understanding, and the interactions between these art forms provide important tools for social change. A.Yemisi Jimoh suggests this in her book *Blues and Jazz People in African American Fiction: Living in Paradox,* as she contextualizes the cultural and racial importance of black music, which, in her book is defined as spirituals, blues, jazz and, eventually, hip-hop as well.

> At the intersection of literature and music, I locate an intertextual relationship between social-historical experiences and the formation of cultural ideas…. What this means in terms of music as a metaphor that refers to the life we find in African American fiction is that we must view the music—as it finds its way into fiction—as part of a historical moment that is involved in the connective social

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[15] Angela Y. Davis, *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism: Gertrude "Ma" Rainey, Bessie Smith, and Billie Holiday* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1998), 82.

> energies of the times. This does not mean that the music and the fiction fail to speak outside their times, only that we expand our knowledge of the music, the fiction, and the times by viewing them in conjunction with one another. History and context, then, are important to a thorough understanding of the shaping influences of any art.[16]

Jimoh's work prove the social function of jazz and related black music is inseparable from the art itself, as with literature. Still, there is the undeniable fact of white involvement in jazz, form its inception. Though this fact, in its existence, does not negate Jimoh's argument, it complicates the argument.

Jimoh's arguments, that the music of black people directly reflects specific elements of a culture, are a more literary approach to the philosophical concept of aesthetics Jimmy Stewart, who documents the ways music—specifically jazz—incorporates black values, and why a distinction between white and black culture is inherent in his "Introduction to Black Aesthetics in Music." He writes: "In America there has never existed a common cultural Interest and heritage in the sense in which cultural interest and heritages exist in other countries. This, though the idolum of a national culture is promulgated in the aesthetic writings produced by the compradors of the white national aesthetic, may account for the reason why, until now, nobody among the majority of whom are white, have been able to deliver an adequate theory of aesthetic value concerning that we have produced."[17] He writes less about black culture being purposefully repressed or black aesthetics being devalued as a calculated bid for white power (for which there is evidence, I'm sure) but instead focuses on the fact that even if power dynamics were not as central to issues of black and white as they are, there is an inherent inability for white aesthetics to provide a basis for judging black aesthetics. As well, because one has institutional sway over

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[16] A. Yemisi Jimoh, *Spiritual, Blues and Jazz People in African American Fiction: Living in Paradox* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2002), 21.

[17] Jimmy Stewart, "Introduction to Black Aesthetics in Music," in *The Black Aesthetic*, edited by Addison Gayle (Garden City, NY: Double Day, 1971). 83.

what is considered "art," there is a power dynamic that arises from the incompatibility of the two aesthetics.

Stewart's introduction also gives one of the most comprehensive and clear definitions to black aesthetics, as he states "Art in our sense must be understood as the accomplishment of creating, the operation of creating. What results therefrom is merely the momentary residue of that operation—a perishable object and nothing more, and anything else you might imbue it with (which the white aesthetic purports to do) is nothing more than mummification.[18]" As a comparison between jazz and classical music, Stewart's black aesthetic certainly holds up, and helps to solidify that the music itself is beholden to a cultural and social operation; it is not just tangentially and historically related to black lives, it is central to black values as well.

Stewart's work is seminal but not solitary in its examination of the black aesthetics of jazz. Hong, a feminist and queer scholar, writes extensively about these black aesthetics of art, through a more queered lens. Her work is clearly laid in a similar foundation of black aesthetics that Stewart puts forth, demonstrated when she writes:

> The refusal to resolve this tension [between political and social death] is best expressed through culture, in particular, through the structure of blues/jazz improvisation, which operates as both a metaphor and method in the Black literary and cinematic texts I examine in this chapter. Scholars of blues and jazz have theorized improvisation as an aesthetic form that enables the simultaneous coexistence of opposite or contradictory tendencies or forces or what I have been calling "difference." Through examinations of works that feature representations of the Jazz Age . . . I posit that improvisation is the aesthetic through which texts create alternative temporalities upon which normative patrilineal temporalities depend but are not able to exhaust.[19]

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[18] Stewart, "Introduction to Black Aesthetics in Music," 84.

[19] Grace Kyungwon Hong, "Blues Futurity and Queer Improvisation," In *Death Beyond Disavowal: The Impossible Politics of Difference* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), 96-97.

Unlike Stewart, however, Hong positions her concerns with aesthetics around the experiences of black queer womanhood and focuses her analysis of the blues on the complex position of futurity in black aesthetics. Spinning off of the theory of black "social death" (the idea that enslavement robs a person of their social function) Hong claims that enslaved peoples actually "performed the social function of representing nothingness itself," and that this "nothingness" was inherently linked to reproduction. She concludes from this that:

> We see the ways in which "natal alienation" is a complex category that refers to both the lack of inheritance and the inheritance of lack, or the inheritance of disinheritance, as a status. Following the scholarship of Black feminists, then, I conclude that the enslaved black female was materially necessary to racial capital as the source of reproductive and productive labor, but in that reproductive role, she threatened to simultaneously undo and reproduce the epistemological separation between social life and social death. We might call this temporality of incomplete consanguinity described by Black feminist scholars a kind of "queer time."[20]

Understanding this unique social position, based in both womanhood and reproduction as they were, provides a critical foundation for Hong's primary claim: "If the notion of the future is embedded in procreation, then to be queer is to repudiate any notion of the future." It is also this concept, she goes on to explain, represented best in the music, inherently black and, in Hong's analysis, inherently queer and feminist as well. The improvisatory, solitary nature of the blues, it's lack of notation and rejection of the importance of a future impact, represents these black experiences and aesthetics.

With this approach in mind, a lot of my early struggles—both with classical music and with jazz—clicked into place. I had noticed these aesthetic aspects superficially: the focus on a moment, the rejection of most Western tradition, the blurred lines. Even without understanding the intricacies and nuances of their philosophical significance, these aspects were also immediately apparent as rooted in something directly contradictory to my own identity. Reading

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[20] Hong, "Blues Futurity and Queer Improvisation," 104.

these words was like an "aha" moment, compiling research that resulted in a new ability to articulate in words what once was just an ineffable sense of discomfort. Identity, it occurred to me, and the precise reason that jazz's identity felt exclusionary, was a crucial aspect of its essence. Because it reflected the values of a racial and cultural identity that was not my own, it would be exclusive for some. Unlike the exclusion of European music, however, it was not constructed carefully to keep a "low" population out; instead, it was to insulate a cultural identity forged in the margins of society, and therefore directly oppositional to the larger, whiter society.

Jazz is not the only form of black music, and jazz itself does not exist in one aesthetic form, as Stewart acknowledges. In his analysis of jazz history and its many aesthetic movements, though, he does bridge each musical time period under the umbrella of a larger aesthetic vision. He writes:

> The collective improvisation that Ornette Coleman introduced into our music in the sixties was employed in the Oliver and Armstrong period, all the way back to our early churches, black to forms in Africa, yet conspicuously absent in the bebop development of the forties. Yet the repeated cadences, or "fours," which typified the music of the bebop phase relate directly to the call and response that is still a definite practice in certain of our Baptist churches today.[21]

Even as he documents ways in which the bebop era may have departed from an aesthetic connection, it is still rooted in black aesthetic values. Stewart's analysis helps to pinpoint the ways jazz is essentially related to a racial and cultural history, without minimizing that racial history into one existence or single value. Like white aesthetics, which have been philosophized upon for years, there are many ways in which values of beauty can be realized in art itself, but Stewart and Hong's collective philosophical approach provides evidence for its inherent racial, and therefore cultural/social relevance.

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[21] Stewart, "Introduction to Black Aesthetics in Music," 87.

Frank Kofsky deconstructs the involvement of white participants in jazz music as a function of binary economic powers: the musicians make music that is fundamentally rooted in black culture, but white producers, recorders and managers, as well as the white free market, have complicated black ownership of that culture. Using leftist theory as his guiding principal in analyzing the black and white history of jazz, he illustrates the complicated relationship between white executives and black musicians, as many were not only exploitative of the black artists whose music they profited from, but many of these executives also had a genuine disdain for the music itself, labeled immoral and "low" for much of its early existence because of its associations with blackness. Kofsky asserts that even the number of black musicians represented in jazz (and clearly, there are many), are still affected by the white executive overseers who quickly made the musician's existence dependent on their own. Kofsky claims that "as a consequence, therefore, even when such executives do choose to undertake a certain amount of activity in the sphere of jazz, the level of employment they create is still kept artificially and unnecessarily low by their scorn for black music and the artists who perform it."[22] Many, including Bessie Smith and many other blues women (and men), were simply not allowed to record, despite their significant impact on the genre and despite there being "*no economic reason whatsoever* why these artists have been refused the opportunity to have their music recorded and dissemination."[23] This *ideological mystification* of white executives in charge of the "political economy of jazz" being able to control exactly how the music is made and disseminated shows that white involvement in jazz could not transcend the racial and structural power imbalance that affected the rest of American culture.

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[22] Frank Kofsky, *Black Music, White Business: Illuminating the History and Political Economy of Jazz* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1998), 23.

[23] Kofsky, *Black Music, White Business*, 59.

Apart from the control over the dissemination of this music, white critics soon gained control of the judgement of its worth as well, a fact that has also clearly shaped the identity of jazz. In Kofsky's understanding, there are two critics: the critic of the masses—which impacted the ways black musicians had to play to American consumerism through white executives in order to succeed—and the intellectual critique, who passed judgement on the quality of black art from a Western, white and academic understanding. He takes aim specifically at Martin Williams's seminal text *The Jazz Traditions*, now considered an outdated (but still foundational) academic approach to jazz.[24] In it, Williams attempts to acknowledge the racial significance of jazz, but does so in a superficial and racist way. Kofsky zeroes in on one of his sentiments in particular, as Williams claim "Negroes, as a race, have a rhythmic genius." This type of rhetoric surrounding jazz musicians feigns respect for the racialized nature of jazz in acknowledging its significance but attributes the music of black artists to things they are, instead of the specific social commentary a black musician wants to make, and how it differs from white experience.

Kofsky hints at the issue, and I may expand: is the stereotyped identity of jazz the one that is congruent with idols of the white academic? Charlie Parker, Miles Davis, John Coltrane, were icons of the genre who did occupy a different space than white American academics but who were far more similar to classical icons like Mozart, Beethoven or Bach, in their dedication to the craft, musical genius, and, it must be mentioned, the insulated nature of their success within male-centric and homosocial traditions. Is this why they contribute so heavily to the "jazz identity" where many others are erased? This is, of course, not to argue that these men made themselves purposefully palatable to a white understanding in order to preserve their legacy. In

[24] Martin Williams, *The Jazz Traditions,* 1st ed. (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1970).

fact, Miles Davis was famously unfriendly towards white musicians and executives, attempting in his early career to interact with them as little as possible. But, the nature of history and identity is largely put into the hands of the record-keepers. Much of the published writing on jazz was authored by primarily educated white men who could connect with the tortured genius in Coltrane or Miles but would have been hard-pressed to connect in the same way with Bessie Smith or Ma Rainey, thus impacting who gets written into history.

V: Complicating Class Narratives:

Jazz as Art and the Classist Caveat of White Validation

Kofsky's analysis of race in leftist terms, centering class struggle, requires us to understand race and class as inherently linked concepts, in both jazz and American culture. In the early ages of jazz, while it still lived and thrived in black spaces, it was also imbued with a very clear class identifier: low. Clearly, race and class had something to do with each other in that identifier, but the barrier of having white aesthetics judge an art form representative of black values of beauty complicates the question of why. Lawrence Levine provides some insight, as he lays out a categorical approach to expressive culture. In his description, which identifies jazz as popular culture or "lowbrow"—meaning of little intellectual worth—and with "culture" being associated with something highly intellectual or "highbrow," Levine proposes that jazz and culture therefore existed as antitheses in the American understanding of their aesthetics. He states:

> Jazz was, or at least seemed to be, the new product of a new age; Culture was, or at least seemed to be, traditional—the creation of centuries. Jazz was raucous, discordant; Culture was harmonious, embodying order and reason. Jazz was accessible, spontaneous; Culture was exclusive, complex, available only through hard study and training. Jazz was openly an *interactive,* participatory music in which the audience played an important role, to the extent that the line between audience and performers was often obscured. Culture built those lines painstakingly, establishing boundaries that relegated the audience to a primarily passive role, listening to, or looking at the creations of true artists. Culture increased the gap between the creator and the audience, jazz narrowed the gap. Jazz was frequently played in the midst of noisy, hand-clapping, foot-stomping, dancing and gyrating audiences. Those who came to witness Culture in art museums, symphonic halls, opera houses, learned that Richard Sennett has called "Silence in the face of Art."[25]

[25] Lawrence W. Levine, "Jazz and American Culture," *The Journal of American Folklore* 102, no. 403 (1989): 7.

Laid out here quite clearly and articulately, Levine identifies the exact factors that led jazz to be considered popular or "low." Levine acknowledges that these categories, as they exist in America, are judgmental and aesthetic, not descriptive: these aesthetic factors are not in and of themselves "low" but because they directly oppose European ideas of "high" culture, it renders jazz unworthy in the public sphere.

Levine laments this reluctance to validate what he considers a true American art, but he fails to acknowledge the racial politics of these class distinctions. He accredits this devaluing of jazz to American culture being rooted in its own colonization and a desire to cling to the European ideal. While he may not be entirely wrong in his analysis, he fails to fully connect the racial impact of these associations. Jazz is anti-European culture because it springs from the culture of non-European descendants, not because it was made inside the geographical location of America. Because it opposed this European standard, and because that standard is held as a normative "neutral" ground, jazz's blackness is also what defined it as a low-class musical style, devoid of artistic value, in the white aesthetic

Acknowledging jazz's black aesthetic as the basis for its disparagement within a white society is important in understanding its positioning as it gained mainstream appeal. As with the more recent, perhaps more well known, history of rock and roll, jazz gained footholds in popular culture, opening it up to new white audiences and, therefore, upcoming white musicians interested in the music as well. Whether helped or hurt by its racial associations, jazz soon became a style of music rooted in black aesthetics yet appealing to another culture, despite white critics gatekeeping it from "legitimate" aesthetic approval. As Levine theorizes, what is popular is still "low," in the European model of defining "culture."

However, jazz soon became profitable, and this now attracted not only white audiences and musicians, but white businesses as well; managers, record companies, and anyone else who could profit off of music still made primarily by black musicians now complicated both the racial and cultural identity of jazz up to question. It began receiving white validation, yet no boost in its cultural position as "high art." This complication belies a more crucial question in American music politics as they relate to black music: does "white America" value the music of black musicians for their art itself, or do we desire ownership of it?

Ownership for the sake of ownership is a critical part of the white interest in jazz. Frank Kofsky sees the entire jazz history through the lens of class struggle. Most of his analysis is not groundbreaking, if one is familiar with Marxist theory, but still illuminating. However, he does flirt with the idea that because class lowness—tied to race as it was—was so fundamental to the substantive messages of jazz, that white managers and recording artists conspired to avoid paying them fairly for their product, in order to keep an "authentic" sound.[26] At the very least, it may be a contributing factor, though certainly not the only motivation. White recording companies had complete control of black employment, as they could expand and decrease jazz operations in tandem with demand. So, despite the ability to pay black musicians a consistent and wage, there was much more money to be made in their continued exploitation.

Kofsky thoroughly acknowledges the ways in which artists were exploited. However, there is a nuance and a dichotomy of existence that he does not fully explore. Black musicians of this time were, by and large, exploited and taken advantage of by white-owned corporations who saw them as products off of which to profit unduly. However, their commercial success—and in

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[26] Frank Kofsky, *Black Music, White Business: Illuminating the History and Political Economy of Jazz* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1998), 18-19.

particularly, the fame bestowed upon certain black artists (like Parker, Armstrong, Davis and Coltrane), would establish a (false) narrative that the playing field was truly level, because of the success of a few black artists.

With acknowledgement to the fact that these men's lives were not without their racial and class-fueled struggles, as well as the fact that some critics still did not give them proper due, this false narrative of musical "boot-strapping" would deflect criticism from the way that most black artists were manipulated and exploited by their record companies, and the inherent racial reasoning behind that. White validation of black music directly parallels its ability to be commercialized. Kofsky's writings show how money was the only motivator strong enough to allow white companies and recording artists—who looked down on the music because of its low-class and racial associations—to invest in black musicians; it was not out of any begrudging acknowledgement of the music's aesthetic worth, just a frank analysis of the ways the musician laborers could be exploited for profit and commercial worth. As well, because of class structures in placethe majority of these record companies being white-owned, the means of disseminating jazz in any kind of mainstream way was inherently tied to both race and class.

Viewing this music's history through a leftist lens can lead to a lot of cynicism, but it is important to acknowledge a less romantic or naïve understanding of jazz than is generally accepted. The current state of jazz is the result of a complex mess of white involvement: between corporate desires to exploit the music for profit, white musicians clambering for a space within these musical circles without thought given to the ways their presence might directly affect the livelihoods of the people who actually created the art, to white consumers interested in both the music and the way it opposed "civilized" culture and white aesthetics, the collective interest white people showed in jazz is undeniable. It's the ethics that are iffy.

White interest in jazz would eventually translate to white appropriation of the music; the jazz scene of most American cities today is the result of a long-term whitewashing of the genre, and its induction into (primarily white) academic institutions. Still, even as bebop took full swing and more white artists took center stage in jazz bands across the world, there was a general societal acknowledgement of black authenticity. Peter Townsend archives jazz films of the 1940s, which represent an understanding of jazz's social function during that time. Several, develop narratives of "folksy" and "authentic" black musicians—from completely fictional characters like a bandleader named Jigger in the film noir-style *Blues in the Night* (1941) to fictionalized portrayals of realistic figures like Louis Armstrong in the biopic *The Fabulous Dorseys* (1947)—who inspire white performers and, in the musical culmination of the story, validate these white musicians with approval of their own music-making abilities. These "validation scenes," as Townsend describes them, acknowledge even a white understanding of black authenticity of jazz and therefore, an understanding of the importance of its racial and cultural roots, contrasting with a desire to also control this type of music, whether in a movie scene spanning a single tune or more broadly, as a course of artistic study entering the scope of white "high-brow art." Both would necessitate white ownership and would further complicate the identity of the genre.

Even with an increasing white audience, some begrudging nods from white academics, a booming generation of white musicians interested in participating, and the cultural creation of the black jazz genius archetype, jazz's introduction into the "mainstream" was an incremental process. Even in the bebop era, with the careers of jazz greats like Miles and Coltrane leaving many unable to deny the artistry of these men and their works, there were still structural ways they were conspired against. The gigging jazz musician's life, even the most famous of them,

was still fraught with racially or class-induced struggles. Hours were long, expectations were higher than for white artists, and musicians were working with the knowledge that the companies in charge of producing their works were not genuinely or artistically interested in them: only the profit they could make from the music. These musicians also suffered more than most from the romanticized "tortured artist" narrative, and their lives were often sensationalized, with racist undertones frequent in the coverage of their personal histories. Jazz's validation in the white mainstream aesthetic came with huge caveats, many involving these issues of ownership over musicians' product, the musical style itself and even the narratives of these men's lives that would contribute to their "tortured genius" image.

My involvement in jazz was a clear example of privilege and feeling of entitlement. Up to this point, my involvement in jazz had been casual, devoid of any understanding of its deeper significance. Obviously, I knew it historically originated in communities of black musicians, but without a working knowledge of the intricacies of that history, to me jazz was more a musical style that could be effectively separated from this history, as it was so often done in high school (and even collegiate) jazz programs. With this research, my advisors and I have given much thought to how I could participate in jazz in the most ethical way, as drawing from other cultures often tows a fine line between appropriation and appreciation. Even the fact that I felt comfortable taking this research on, given the knowledge that its identity directly opposes my own, stems from the neutrality afforded to whiteness and jazz music's relocation into a whiter, academicized and institutional place. This research does not shoulder the responsibility for that relocation, obviously, but it is the symptom of a larger issue. With an acknowledgement that there is privilege implicit in my work, I still believe that this nuanced understanding of race and class, as functions of each other in jazz's history, allows for a fuller appreciation of the music. It

does not change the way this music has been irrevocably affected by its introduction into a whiter mainstream, nor does it fix the issues of ownership at the heart of jazz's racial identity. However, at the very least, positioning jazz as a fundamental product of this race/class identity gives it the context it needs to be felt in its full force: more than just a style of music, but a crucial tool for social commentary and cultural communication. I did not contribute to that commentary or that community, but I could at least reflect these existences in my research.

For me, this was where the analogy of travelling through a foreign country came to an abrupt end. Or maybe the analogy was rather spot on, but the problem with tourism is that it often looks at least a little bit like colonialism on a smaller scale, and this was the same feeling I had when thinking about my past experiences with jazz. I had mindlessly toured through this music as if it were solely another musical style to learn and consume for my own benefit, when in fact there was aspects of both the music and the pedagogy itself that spoke to a lived experience and a cultural identity that I could conveniently overlook because jazz has largely been divorced from this identity. Through the course of this research, I have found that these aspects of jazz are not supplementary, and they should not be electively understood by those interested in the racial and cultural history, but instead by everyone who engages with this music, because these identities are at the heart of the music itself.

This understanding therefore informs how I think jazz specifically should be taught—as a function of culture and with the historical background demonstrated clearly in the music itself. However, the pedagogical methods inherent to the music itself (the call-and-response, learning by doing, focus on the momentary creation of music over the final product) are themselves important aspects of any and all pedagogical methods, especially if inclusivity is the goal. By making jazz accessible to cellists through pedagogical materials informed by my identity,

combined with a thorough understanding of the ways my identity differs from the one represented in the music itself, I endeavor to put forth a document that shows how classical musicians can benefit from an expansion of the current teaching practices to include those of a non-western and non-classical background. Learning jazz on cello is not the skill I want to communicate to a reader; I'm not offering a way for young cellists to bolster their artistic flexibility, although that may certainly be a side effect. The purpose is to understand the issues of a traditional classical method and to solidify that these traditions do not represent the only true form of pedagogy but rather an artificially exclusive teaching method that begets many unhealthy practices. This research simply demonstrates that there are other paths out there, based in something outside of this Western tradition and therefore inherently different and representative of other cultural identities. These non-Western paths not only open the door for validating and accepting non-Western identity within Western classical music, but also calls into question the binaries in teaching, which have relegated jazz methods pedagogy to one genre, and classical methods to other, when in fact they can serve more as functions of one another.

This research started with the question of identity. Although it was based in my exclusion from jazz because of my identity that motivated me to expand outside my comfort zone,
Some aspects of the generalized jazz identity are correct. Black values and aesthetics are inherent, it's lower-class associations stem from a concerted effort to oppose American/European "high-brow" values of art. These parts of jazz's identity can be found in the music as well as its history, and they are fundamental to the existence of the genre and the way it should be/is taught. However, other parts of its identity have been misrepresented. Black feminism and black womanhood as lived experiences live in this music too, and its erasure from the identity associated with jazz can be attributed to the identities of the (largely male) record-keepers.

Boiling jazz down to single identity often means boiling these identities down to a single existence as well; but each is an important contribution to the musical documentation of a larger community, a way of communicating back and forth from player to player in the confines of a single tune, or more broadly across the canon of the jazz repertoire.

VI: Auditions, COVID-19, and the Experiences that Shaped this Research

My final audition is the best one I've ever had. I think it may have been the best I've ever played. After a tiring school year, an exhausting amount of reflection and a little panic over whether or not I was actually ready for this competitive, painful side of the career, I finally had a win. There's no movie moments here and there's nothing romantically perfect about this audition; it had its flaws of course. The Bach is still difficult to play like it's as easy as breathing; a Caprice by Piatti with infamous double stops has numerous but minor intonation issues. But all of this, I'm unconcerned with. I bookmark it for work in the future, I unemotionally dissect it as a learning tool but I avoid the sting of disappointed and overly harsh self-criticism.

I won't reduce this success to a change in perspective because, of course, its larger than just one thing. However, I take to heart what I have discovered through this research. As I start this audition, I breathe out and consciously try to breathe in that uncomfortable approach to music that I've spent a semester and a half attempting. I try to expel the concern over the finished product, because I'm not actually interested in this "mummified product" as Stewart had put it. I embrace the few moments of messiness as the inherent beauty of it. I'm not playing jazz, but I am applying a jazz perspective. It's not a flicked switch, it's a pedagogical method applied to a performance.

I really don't want to reduce this research to a false cure for the frustrated classical musician. I will struggle again with questions of identity, with the many issues of the classical world, as will every musician and artist I know. What my research does is confirm that there *are* specific issues with the classical approach to pedagogy, and that there are ways to apply the pedagogical approach of other cultures—in this case jazz—to a classical world. And if we are

committed to diversifying or improving the classical world, we will make it value to seek out these new approaches but avoid appropriation by understanding these pedagogical methods in their full historical and musical existences, with due examination to the music and what experience it communicates. Music is not a monolith; just as my research has both complicated and emphasized jazz's identity, classical music could benefit from an interrogation of its own identity. I contribute what I can to any cellist or musician interested in moving outside the traditional routes of pedagogy.

In the midst of academic and personal discovery, something larger than both this paper and my own existential worries about my future career came into the forefront of my—and everyone's life: the COVID-19 pandemic. Living through this experience is dramatic, even for the most privileged of us. I get kicked out of school. The family I had built there, the schedule and independence on which I relied, my home and community, are ripped away from me. I miss my students, who I had been feeling much more optimistic about working with after my final audition had confirmed that there was validity in these new approaches to teaching. I worried I'd missed the chance to help them in the way I wanted.

On a bigger scale, though, the world gets turned upside down. Even as I put the finishing touches on this thesis, I can feel that there are ways that living through this moment in history is affecting me, and that they're too abstract to articulate exactly. For many of us, it's more than we can compartmentalize, so we do not, and we move on as best we can. There are moments in this time—they kind of feel like the moment you realize you're dreaming right before you wake up—where I think I almost grasp the gravity of the situation; how life has changed so much and so quickly, and the paralyzing fear at all prospects of what happens next, because we can never go back but I don't know if we have what it takes to move forward. But then, like waking, these

moments are gone. I distract myself with something half-fulfilling, something to pass the time, and life feels semi-normal again. That's how the days go.

I attempt to keep my schedule. It doesn't work. I revise my game plan, expecting less practice time, less writing time, giving myself space and time to breathe, but I still need more than I allotted for. For two weeks, I can hardly get anything done. Facebook and other social media have allowed me to see how other artists are handling their isolations, and though I try to find solace in Yo-Yo Ma's songs of comfort or Itzhak Perlman's endearing livestreams, I fail to connect with them. Even my friends, fresh off of the exact same major life change as myself, seem to be doing better. They post daily practice videos, relish in the extra hours to get back to fundamentals and seem excited to continue to hone their craft. I've hardly touched my cello or my work.

In my more extreme boughts of unproductivity, I look back on an interaction I had right before leaving DePauw. On her way out of the music building, during the last in-person interaction I would have with her, a professor offered me the solemn line "the only way out is through, right?" She said it casually enough and at the time, it really felt like the exact thing I needed to hear, and in these moments of feeling particularly hopeless and out of control, there is some comfort to be gained from the knowledge that the incessant marching forward of time remains reliable, and that it hopefully will carry "out," as well. At the time, it felt like the movie moment, the beginning of my personal triumph over this pandemic perhaps the cue for a montage depicting my individual resistance to having my life turned completely upside down with metaphorical implications about a larger societal resistance as well. But these movie moments stay in the movies.

I do keep pushing. Everything takes longer, and very little work gets done on an authentic whim of intrinsic motivation: it's all just grinding out a product as time marches on. As I make very slow, frustrating progress, it becomes clear to me that acknowledging that this research occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic is necessary to my thesis. For one, I think it is anthropologically important to keep record of my thoughts and experiences as I live through a major historical event. As well, this memoir attempts to be vulnerable and honest with its reader and avoiding the subject of something so massive would be dishonest, in a way. Mostly, though, I think this pandemic is going to be a cultural milestone, and even before the brunt of it affected American lives, the storm that is this pandemic's full and far-reaching effect, has been brewing for a long time. Living through something like this has solidified so many of our suspicions about the massive faults in our society. And these same flaws, reflected in the issues of this pandemic, also informed my research.

Privilege, identity, social and cultural positioning occupy my mind and shape my work. I want to be clear also, as I explore my thoughts and feelings through this time that I continue to acknowledge my own privilege, even in this pandemic. I have the comfort of keeping record because, at the moment I am healthy. I have the privilege of boredom because I have a family and home that allows me to safely social distance with people I love. I have a fighting chance against overwhelming loneliness and depression, as I have the technology to keep in touch with those I love, even to continue to work and learn as the world turns upside down. And though I don't speak to an experience of suffering, in the most catastrophic way, I want to acknowledge the cognitive dissonance of trying to learn, create art, function and plan for a future while a deadly disease sweeps the world and kills. It is no new concept that art exists against a backdrop of human suffering, but never have I understood it so concretely as I do during this pandemic.

Yes, the COVID-19 pandemic pushes me away from school and all my resources. Because of self-isolation, my motivation hits an all-time low and I'm more cynical than ever, in the wake of other's okay-ness. And yes, it directly impacted this research. I had planned to perform a final performance at Jazz at the Duck and I missed out on half a semester of lessons with Dr. Snyder. I was supposed to teach more with these new pedagogical approaches in mind, and though I was able to do a few lessons in this new style, I still categorize this as a deficit in my research. The student who had such an effect me earlier is left hanging, and I don't know the best way forward in helping her. I do my best to set up some assignments that I think will be both fun and educational, without any pressure to make deadlines or graduate her Suzuki book. She sends me a recording of a "transcription" of her favorite pop tune. I write back with positive comments and questions about her process and what she liked or dislike about. We fulfill a teacher/student relationship, but I don't feel any of the satisfaction I thought I would, to see her happy to make music. Like jazz itself, the interpersonal relationship of teaching is so crucial to its success and without it, I feel lost. All this certainly made this research harder, and so I felt compelled to include a glimpse of what this research was supposed to be.

However, the most important reason for me to document how it felt to live through this moment in time, in this research paper, is not to present what I thought this project would be, but to give context to what it became. I think it is the cognitive dissonance of this situation, being forced to acknowledge the inherent privilege of my life, and, more specifically, the classical musical world in which my education and future career are situated, that start to illuminate to me why this research has been so important. The many artists I observe on Facebook, who's success in isolation irks me in the deepest way, represent the exact issues with the classical world I have been detailing in this research. While I won't deny that art is a powerful tool that fulfills a deep

need for all of us, classical musicians have been insulated in a world of privilege that makes these gestures of musical togetherness, during this time, seem quite empty. I get tired of seeing my friends and colleagues' main concern be the creation something beautiful or artistic out of an event that is neither, or their doubling down on the belief that music will unite us all even in times of suffering. I became far more aware of my own privilege as a classical musician by way of this research. The pandemic, and what it exposed about the lives of many of us classical musicians, solidified how important it was to understand when we are teaching from such a point of privilege.

We know this will change the world forever. We hope this means in structural ways, as this pandemic has exposed just how fragile life here can really be. Figuring out the way forward will be messy and full of failure. In some ways, it reflects what I've learned here: the importance of focusing on that slow-moving, incremental progress as the progress itself, to celebrate the constant state of creation and change, rather than the celebration of single acts and mummified products.

As music gets a little harder to make, it is something we all need a little more. Jazz necessitates so much communication, and it's spontaneous, improvisatory nature is most effectively achieved in person. As we move forward into a time when the simple act of being together is no longer promised, a lot is already changing about the musical world—jazz and classical—and I think it's for the better. Despite those artists on Facebook touting their productive ability, I see this now as the exception to a much more average rule. In the past few months, I have heard the most candid and vulnerable account how poorly most of us are handling this event. Articles online are full of psychologists and doctors explaining why getting things done is so hard, teachers advocating for their colleagues to go easy on their young students who

are reeling from a drastically changed world, with very few coping abilities. Professors, parents and peers, for the first time, all sit back and stop demanding each other to be the most productive version of themselves, cranking out final products in the same way. Sure, some things don't change; deadlines must be met, requirements made etc., but, overall, I notice a forgiveness in this time that I'd been craving before, without really knowing it.

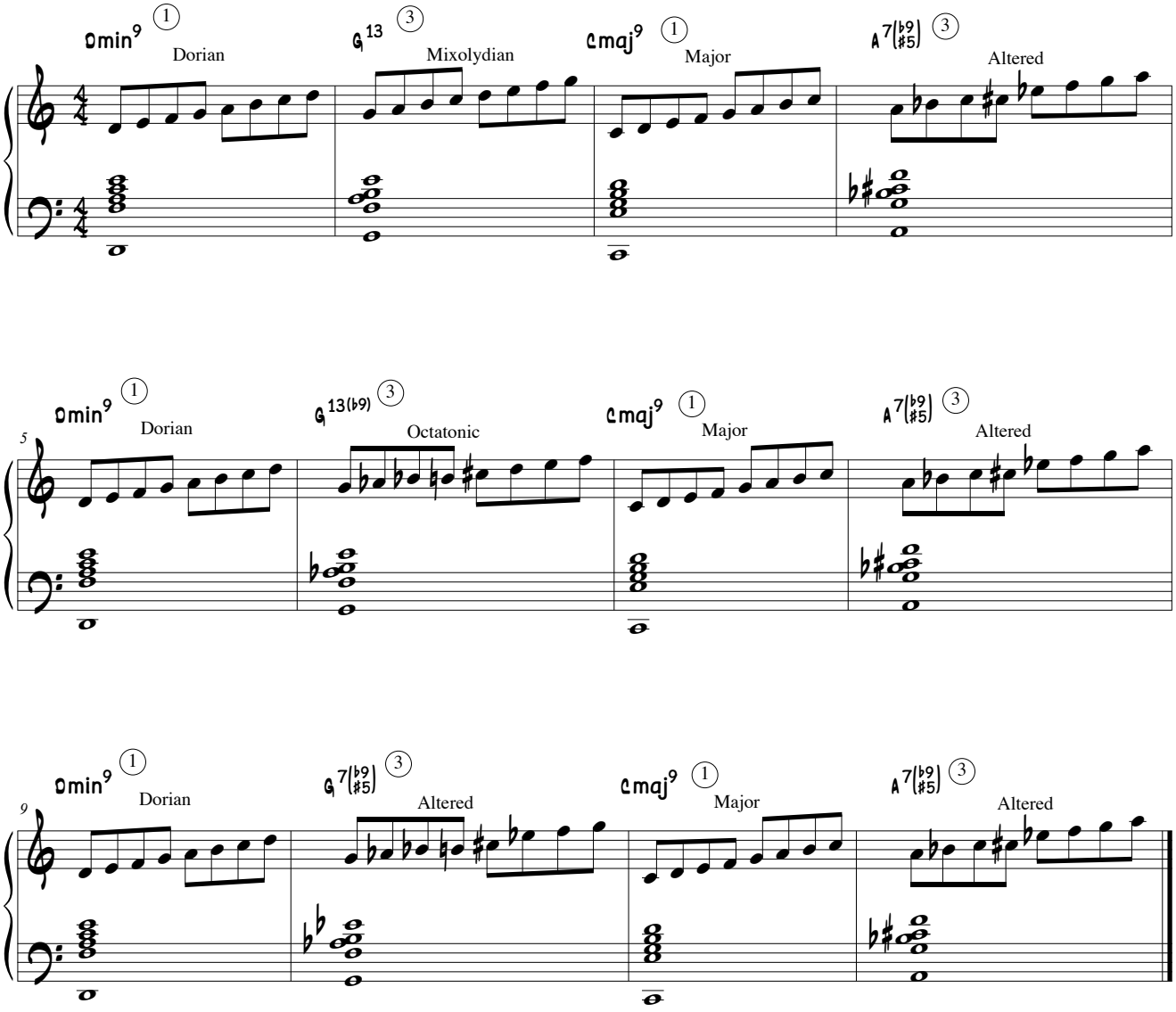
My research was proposed in order to address deficits in the current methods of teaching classical music, by way of applying a different, non-Western method to classical music. I think my research has achieved this, at least for myself. The actual process of learning a new way to think, a new way to comprehend music, has had a direct impact on how I view practicing and performing in a classical tradition. It's not yet a perfect or complete skill that I've acquired; unlearning almost two decade's worth of training could not be fixed in a single semester. At this point, the awareness of the issue itself is enough for now, coupled with the occasional ability to directly apply these new skills to a performance or practice session, however irregular or inconsistent they can be. The fact that it works in some capacity on myself, however, gives me hope for it working on my students, and other young musicians in general. All habits and mindsets are learned, and if pedagogical methods, introduced as young as they often are in the classical string world, can be modified to teach new mindsets as I propose to do, we have the potential to spare a lot of young musicians from the unnecessarily harsh traditions of Western pedagogy.

Again, I want to avoid any conclusions that sound like simple solutions to rather complex problems. None of this research is offered as a comprehensive solution. What I mean to document is my observations of both the musical world and the world at large, as I am living it in it today. And in this moment, I notice some overlapping themes, in this research and in my daily

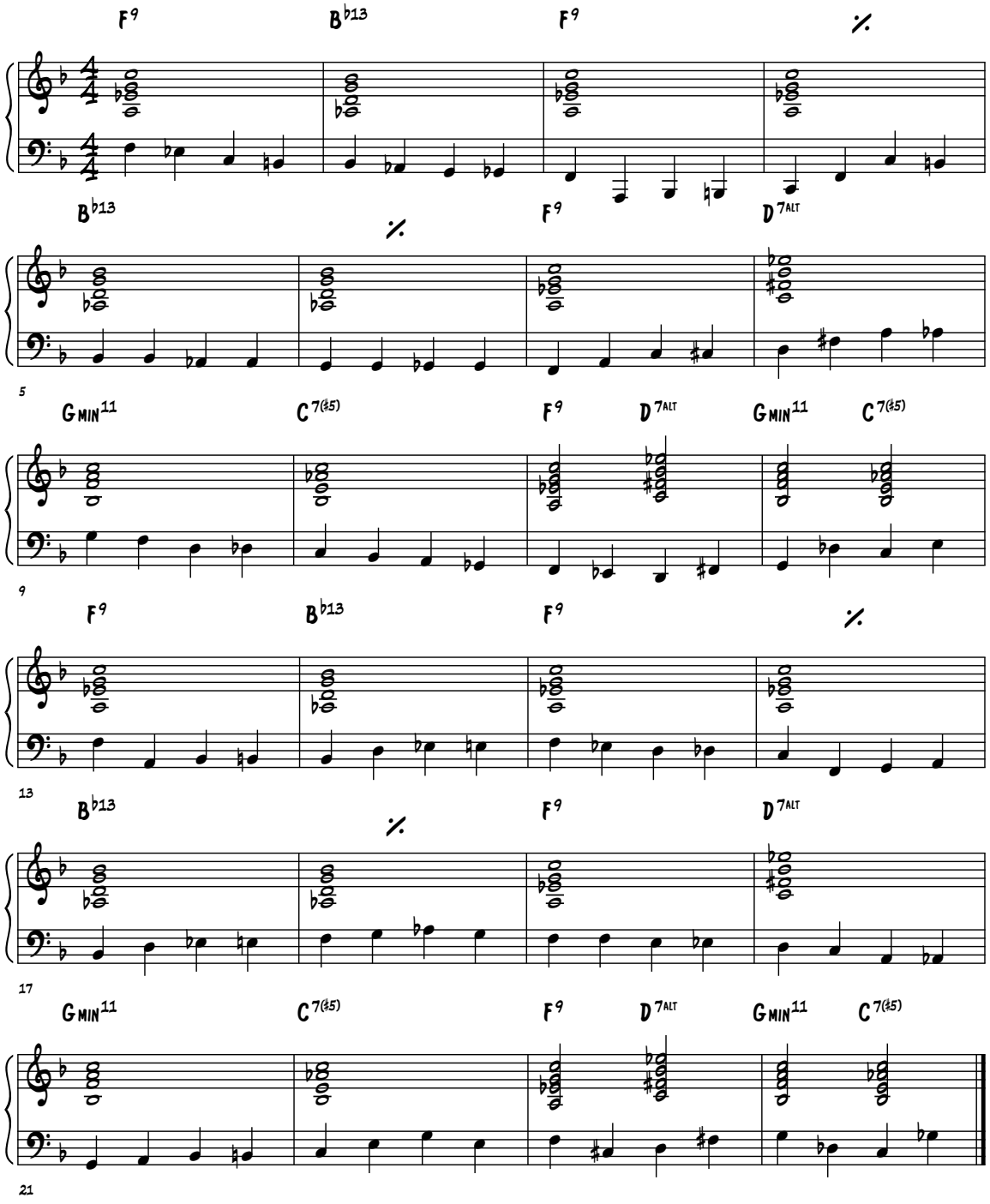
life now. We are all in need of things we cannot have, now more than ever, and we are finding substitutes for those things, or trying to creatively figure out other ways to survive as musicians without an audience. The world is participating in a kind of improvisation in this moment, and, as I move forward through rather uncertain and unprecedented times, I call upon all of my education, including this research. It helps to focus on the moment at hand, to avoid worrying so much and for so long on “right” notes and “right” answers. For now, I control what I can and embrace the element chaos that runs rampant in situations like this. I breathe in and I breathe out. I keep improvising, and I listen to the world around me improvise right back.

Appendices

Appendix A: “2561 Exercises: Chords and Scales for Improvised Solo



Appendix B: Blues Bass Lines in F



Bass Lines Usually Contain:

1. The root on the downbeat
2. The correct third or seventh
3. 1/2 step before the next chord root
4. One other good sounding note

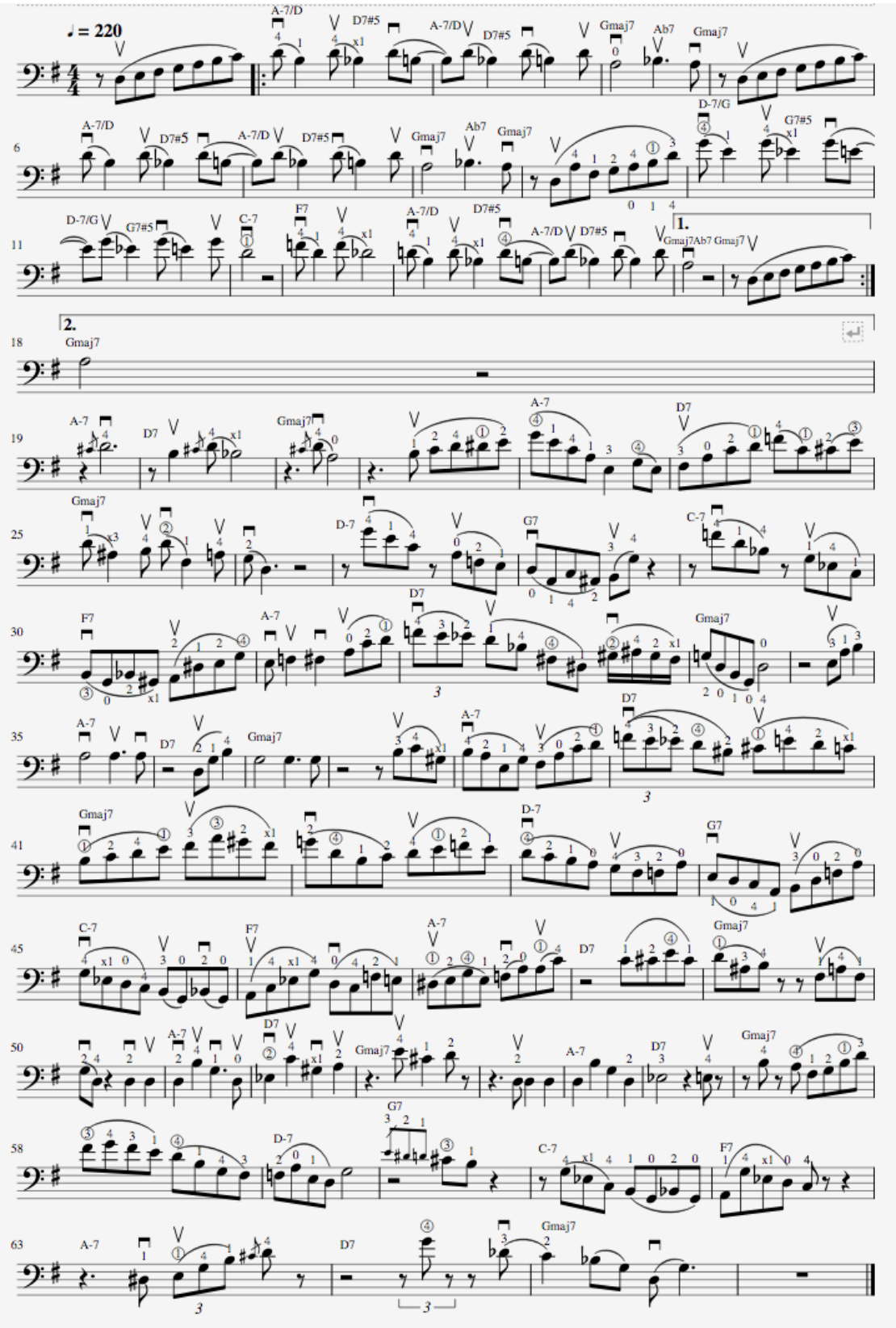
Sometimes Also:

1. Root, fifth, root, 1/2 step
2. repeated notes

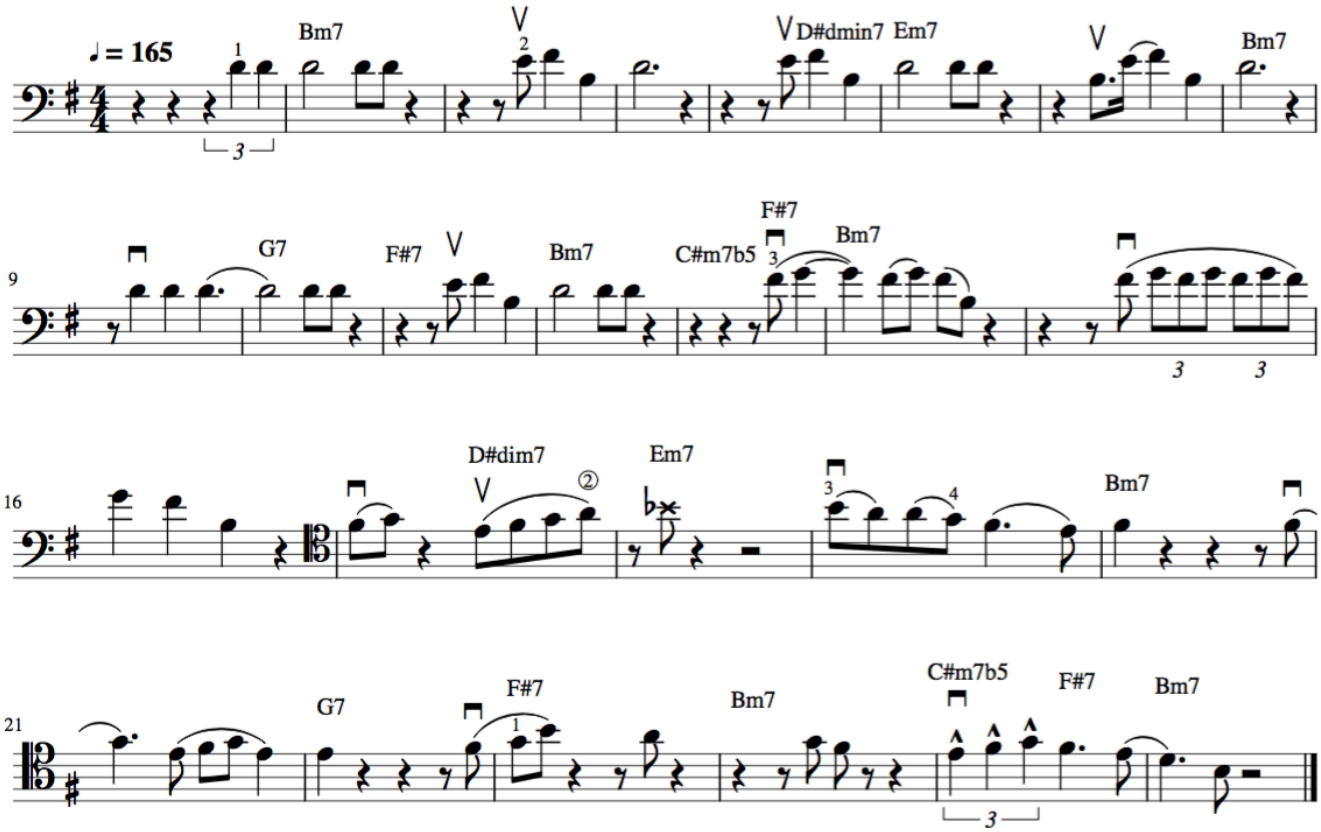
But Always:

1. Cover a wide range over a long period of time

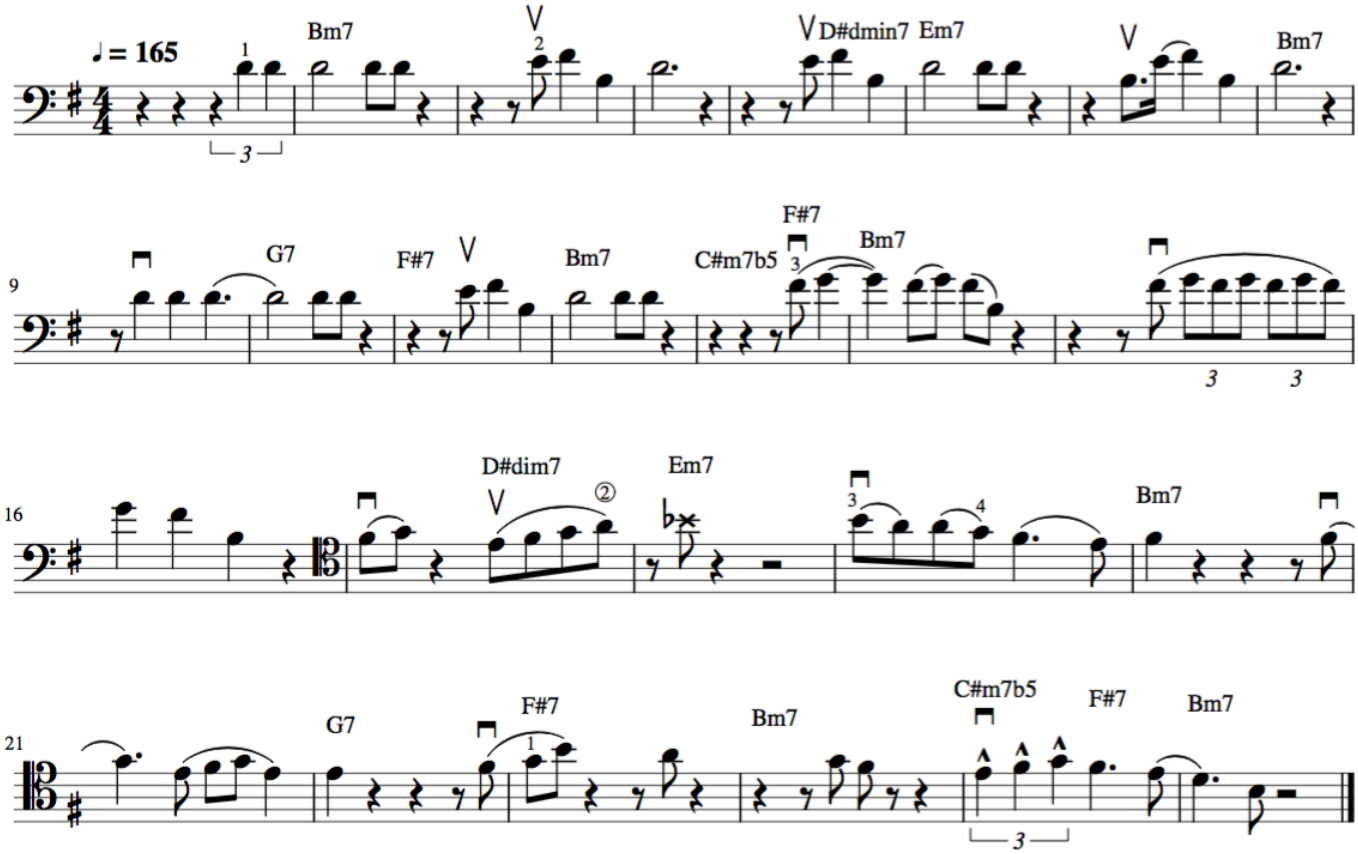
Appendix C: Sonny Rollin's "Pent Up House" Transcription (Head and 3 Choruses)



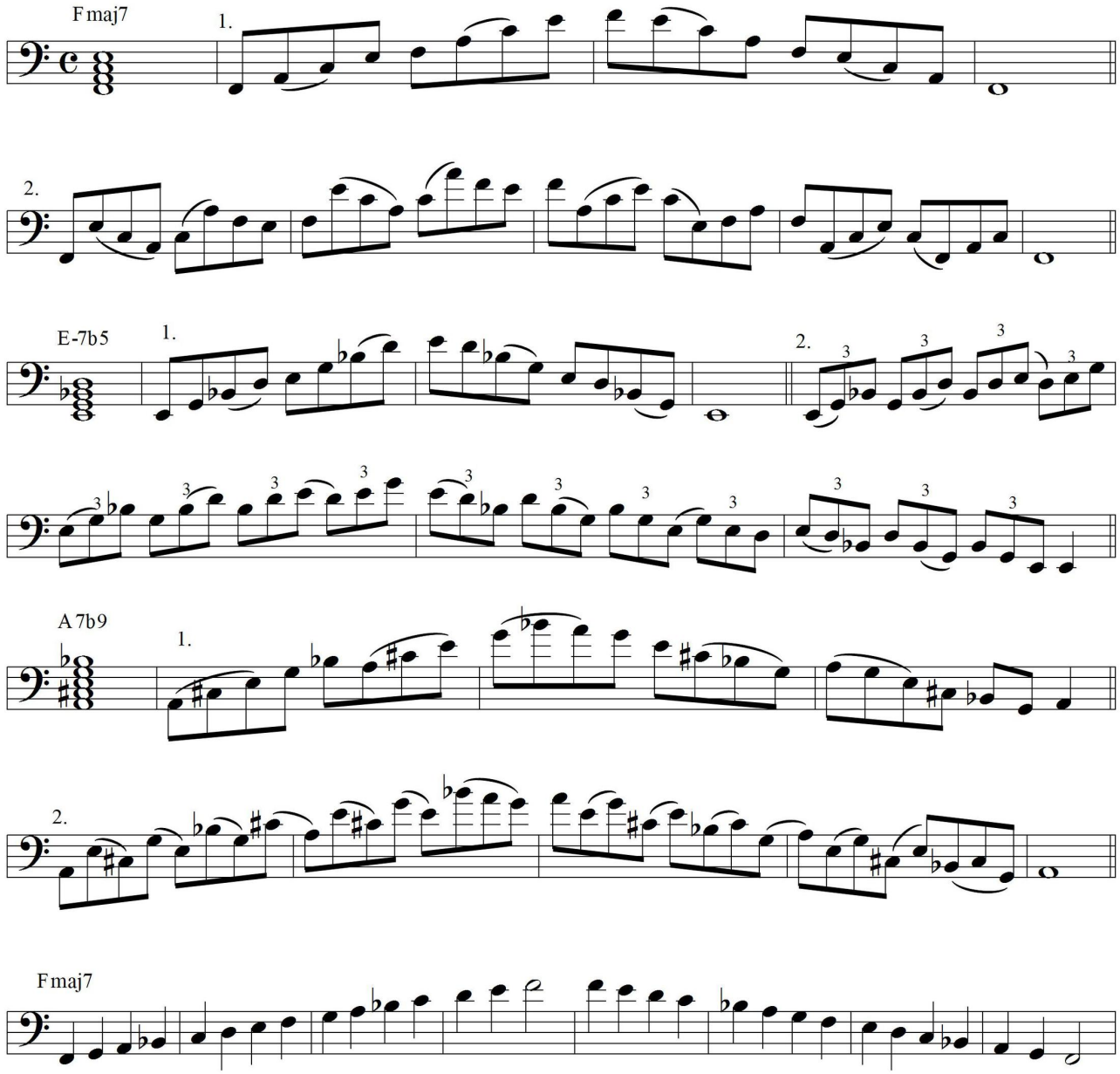
Appendix D: Jazz Scales with Cello Universal Fingerings



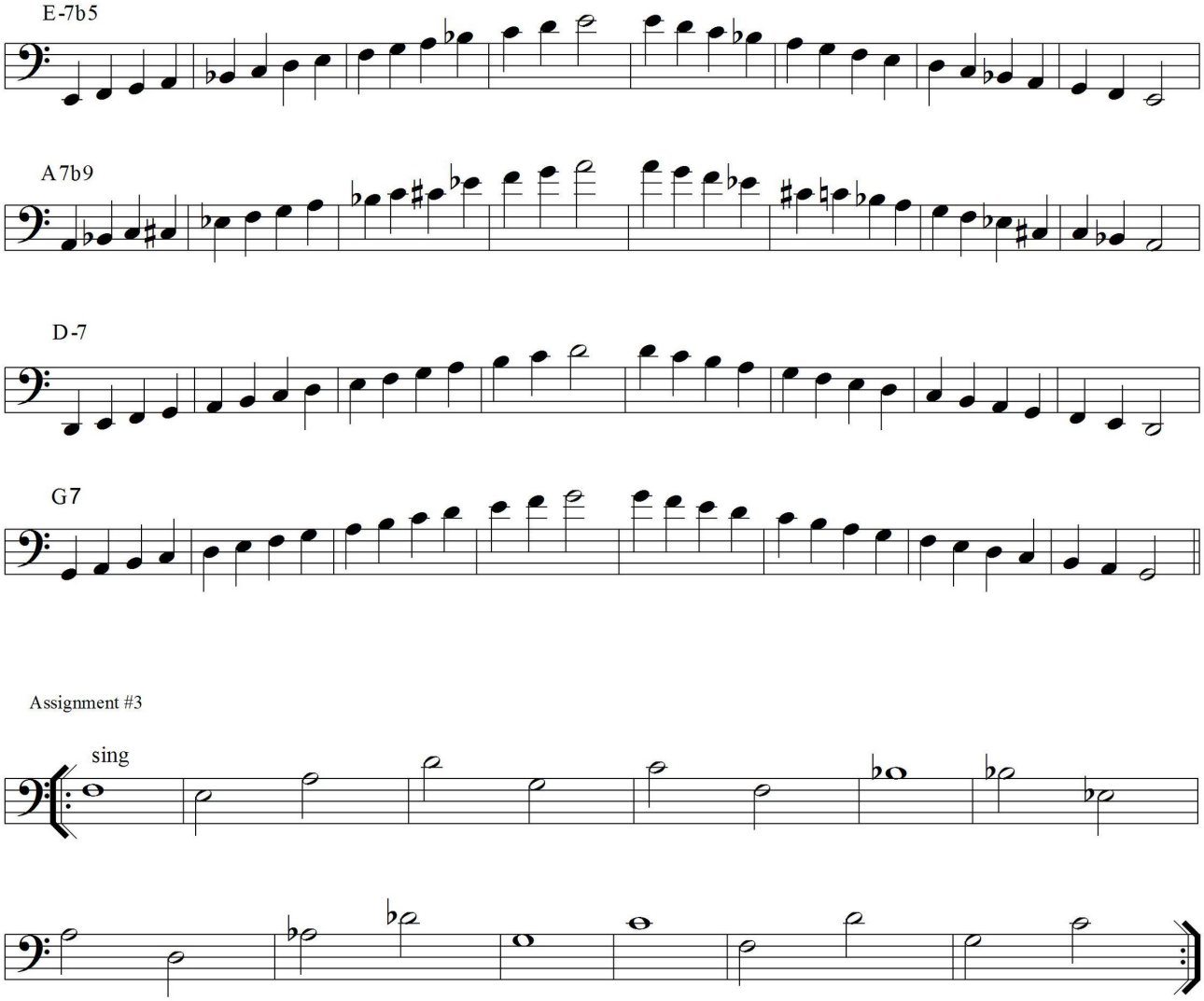
Appendix E: Curtis Fuller's "Five Spot After Dark" Transcription (2 Choruses)



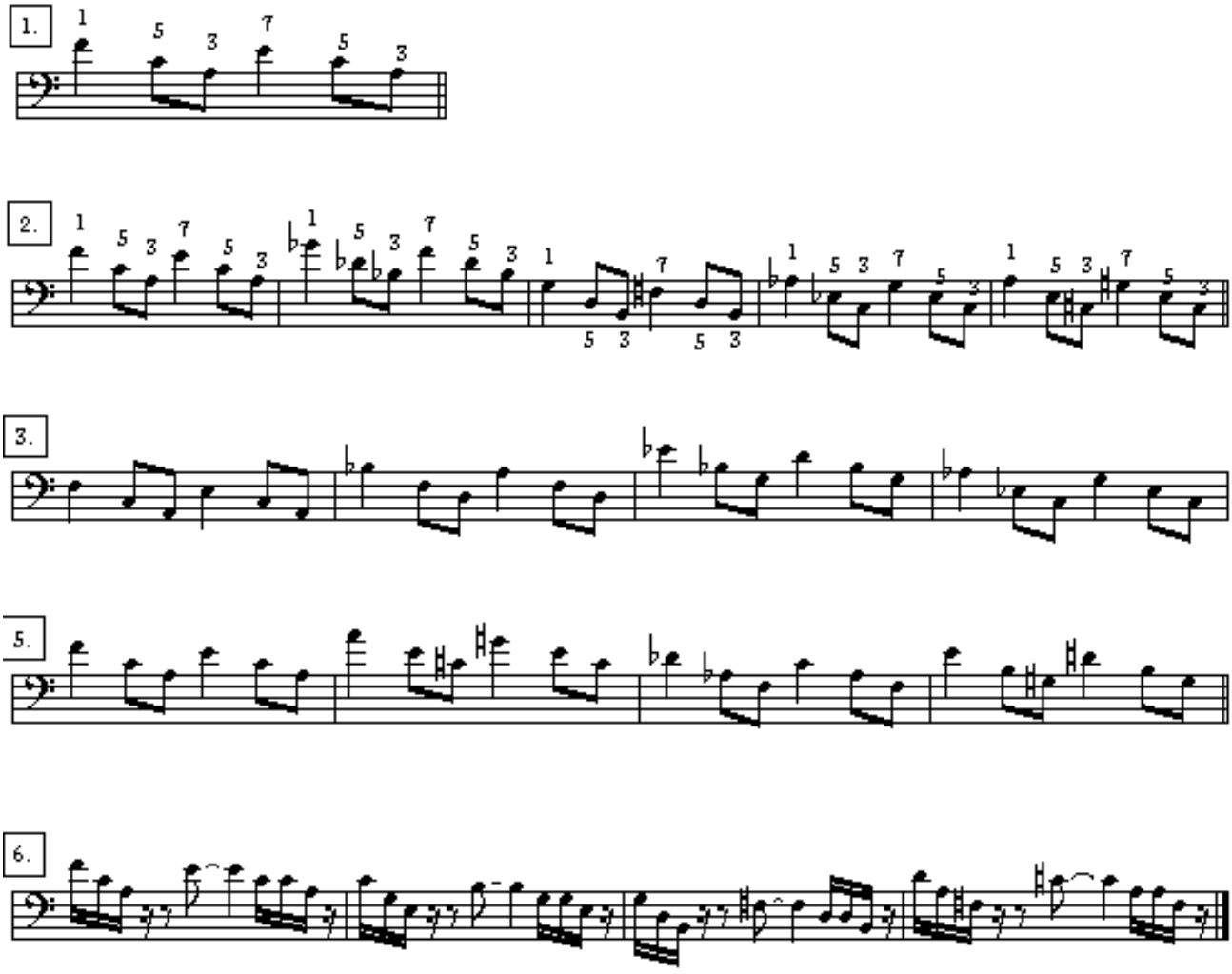
Appendix F: Erik Friedlander's "Lesson 2:" Assignment 1



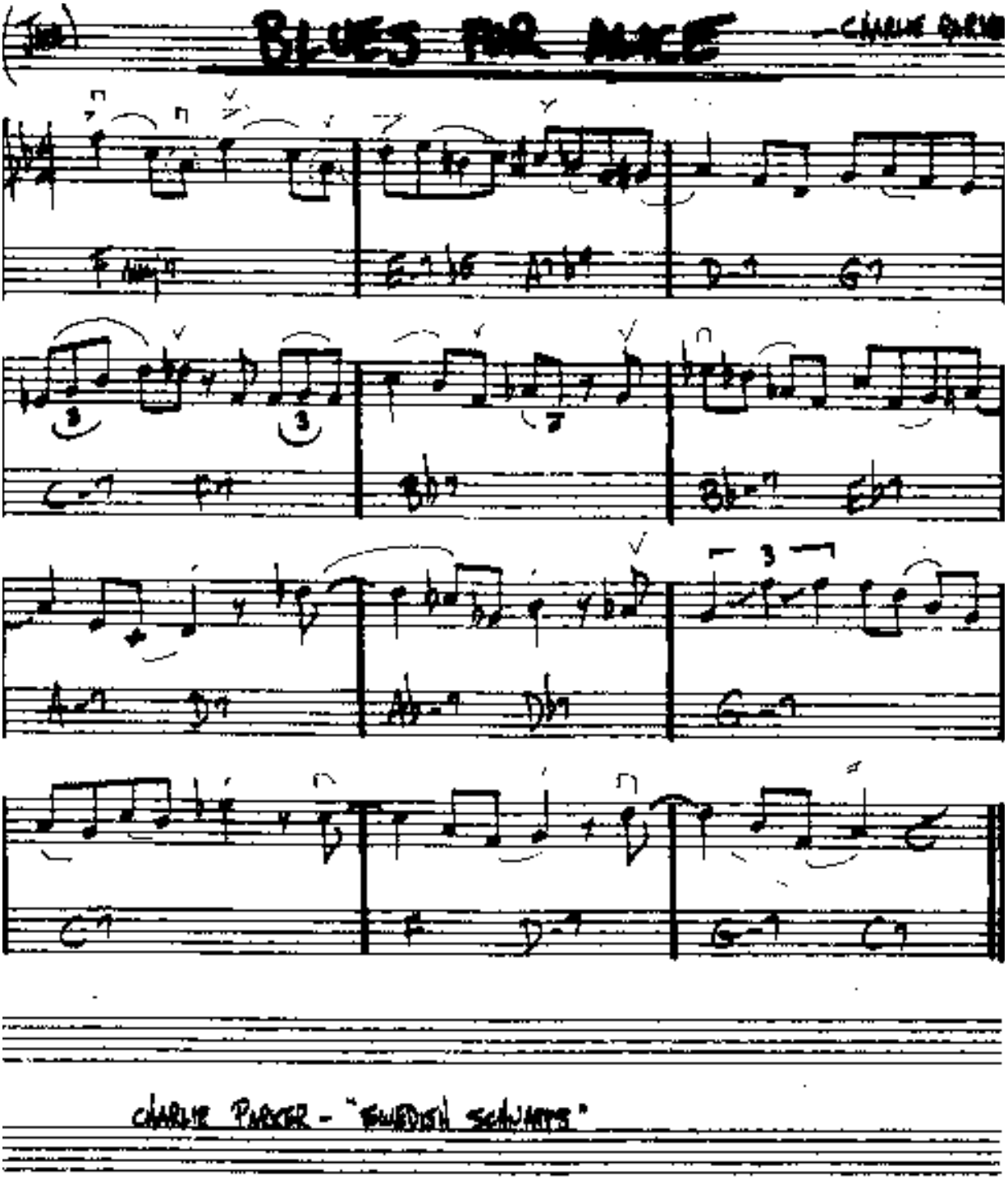
Appendix G: Erik Friedlander's "Lesson 2:" Assignment 2



Appendix H: Erik Friedlander's "Lesson 2:" Assignment 3



Appendix I: Erik Friedlander's Bowings: Blues for Alice



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